

Volume II

*The
Guennol
Collection*

*THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
New York*

The Guennol Collection



Harlem Lowlands, November,
1879, by *Albert Pinkham Ryder*

Volume II

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Collection*

THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART
New York

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If a man tells us that he sees differently than we,
or that he finds beautiful what we find ugly, we
may have to leave the room, from fatigue or trouble;
but that is our weakness and our default.

J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

Acknowledgments

We believe this second volume of the Guennol Collection shows our taste and artistic point of view to have widened and to have become, perhaps, more eccentric. As collectors we are now even less dependent on outside advice than before.

Nevertheless, without professional assistance our collection would have suffered. And so it is with a deep desire to say *thank you* that we mention the following specialists who have been more than generous in making suggestions and protecting us from our shortcomings: Inez Amor, Rex Arrowsmith, John I.H. Baur, Michael D. Coe, Gordon F. Ekholm, the late Richard Ettinghausen, William Fagg, Lloyd Goodrich, Stephanie Guest, Herbert Härtel, William Holm, Peter David Joralemon, Michael Kan, Robert Moes, Dorothy Jean Ray, Elizabeth Rosen, Charles Ryskamp, Robert Skelton, Peter Stewart, Brooke Travelstead, James Watt, and Sylvia Williams.

We also express our deep appreciation to the authors of this volume, who have given life to the diversity of objects it contains. The collection is not their collection, not necessarily their taste, but their articles do, in many ways, portray personal reactions to our acquisitions. And since, for the most part, they seem to have taken kindly to our collecting efforts, we are doubly confident that you, too, will enjoy the collection. We certainly hope so.

We are also most grateful to George Gowen; Philippe de Montebello, Director of the Metropolitan Museum; John P. O'Neill, Editor in Chief, and the other members of the Metropolitan Museum's editorial department who have helped bring this book together; and all those whose patient and thoughtful assistance over the months has combined to make this project possible. Bruce Knight and the other photographers of the Guennol Collection objects also deserve our gratitude.

Whatever success this volume may have will result largely from the efforts of our good friends mentioned above. Whatever faults rise to the surface will be ours alone.

EDITH AND ALASTAIR BRADLEY MARTIN

July 1982

Foreword

TTrue collecting is an intensely personal and private adventure. The collector, giving emphasis to certain specialized forms of art or to specific artists, can be as creative in his pursuit of his quarry as the artist who unfolds his own vision of the cosmos to the rest of the world.

The Guennol Collection is an example of a very personal selection and emphasis. The Martins have not followed fashion or the tastes of others, nor have they tried to anticipate the trends of some sort of artificial art market. Instead, the collection reflects the tastes of two people searching for objects of personal significance among the visual patrimony of our world. Not only have they pursued remarkable or unique objects of the type acknowledged by all to be “great,” but they also have found beauty and meaning in works overlooked or regarded patronizingly by critics or art historians. For collectors who have sought out and acquired such diverse monuments to human achievement as the Renaissance hunting horn, a Toba Sojo fragment, or a Cycladic head, to perceive also the power of a Zuñi fetish or a mallard decoy—and to endorse such objects on an equal level as “serious” works of art—takes conviction and, in a certain sense, courage.

This century may be the last in history when individuals have the opportunity to form major collections of art. The days of dynasties of collectors, such as the Medici and the Hapsburgs, seem to be numbered. International laws and well-intended moral attitudes may eventually stifle and snuff out the very possibility of acquiring meaningful art in the future. Even museums are being bridled. The very sources of the wealth of art that constitutes the artistic heritage of our nation are being strangled. We in the United States may be left with an imbalance: artistic abundance in certain localities, and deserts elsewhere. The Martins have taken advantage of living at a time when collecting is still respected and when the collector can set the cultural tenor of his community. They have acquired fine works of art when these were still available and affordable, but their originality as collectors is revealed in the diversity of their passion for Penitente art of the southwestern United States and eastern folk art, as well as Northwest Coast art.

In this volume alone one sees the astuteness and catholicity of the Guennol collectors, who have been moved, for instance, by a prehistoric Indian copper sculpture, one of the few Ife terra-cotta portrait heads outside Nigeria, a Greek marble, Olmec and Maya jades, and Mexican folk paintings.

It may be that only the collector can truly appreciate the whole of his collection. For, apart from the intrinsic beauty of each object, collecting is an experience to be remembered—possibly preceded by a long search, frustrations, then the locale where the piece was first en-

countered and the personalities involved in its discovery, and, perhaps, a final anguish as to whether to purchase or not. The collector usually sees many things before the right one appears, but it can be—with luck—love at first sight. The collector must be self-educated and, if one's taste is as catholic as the Martins', one must know and feel a great deal about a number of disparate fields. A collector must occasionally rely on professionals to authenticate a purchase, but whether or not to acquire an object is ultimately dependent upon the integrity of the collector.

The Martins have obviously had a fine time forming their collection. Each part mirrors some aspect of the collectors, finally revealing a double portrait of a sensitive, warm, alive couple, with a quiet but delicious and subtle sense of humor, filled with joy and awe at the works of man, whether highly refined or of childlike naïveté. The very diversity of the collection, and the exercise of the highest aesthetic standards in assembling it, give the Guennol Collection its very special quality, setting it quite apart from other important contemporary collections.

GILLET G. GRIFFIN

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Art Unorphaned

*And we'll wander through
The wide world
And chase the buffalo.*

—Lewis Carroll

This is the second “report” on what some may consider to be a lifetime of eccentric collecting. It is a reprise with variations on a collecting theme. To give the most pleasure, this volume should be read on holiday, when the calendar supplants the clock. The Guennol Collection will appeal more to those who live in Peoria than in Paris. With all its diversity, the collection has, I believe, unity and style. It is truly an American strawberry.

Art collecting is an art.

In an introduction to an exceptional private collection Metropolitan Museum of Art curator Oscar Muscarella once wrote about the “keen philosophical differences of opinion concerning the nature of private collections.” Public museums are important to all of us, but surely private collections in all their diversity and multiplicity may be even more so. In them art is preserved and honored, and the collection itself as created by the individual collector is a work of art.

The true collector is born with an eye. He can walk into a roomful of things and with a glance select the best. John Hunt, the late Irish medievalist-dealer, told how he once identified a fellow visitor to The British Museum as a famous collector whom he had previously known only by reputation: Hunt was searching for an ivory in the Medieval Hall when he noticed a man whose eyes lit up whenever he came upon something special. Hunt introduced himself and confirmed the stranger’s identity. Dealers, of course, are trained to stalk their prey.

One of the surest tests of a collector’s eye is to ask him to name his favorite objects. Here are some of mine: the red quartz torso of an Egyptian princess (1350–1375 B.C.) from the Louvre; the Louvre fragment of the east frieze of the Parthenon; the eagle vessel from the treasury of Saint-Denis; the Ardagh chalice from Ireland; the fifteenth-century German Hohenlohe

sapphire-and-enamel necklace; the talisman of Charlemagne; the Elamite copper man's head at The Metropolitan Museum of Art; the Book of Kells; the *Très Riches Heures* of Jean, duc de Berry; a Leonardo animal drawing from Windsor Castle; the royal gold cup of the kings of France and England of about 1380, a major treasure of The British Museum; and two parcel-gilt bronze Chinese figures of leopards inlaid with silver and garnets from the western Han dynasty, which appeared in The British Museum exhibition of 1973–74 from the People's Republic of China.

My friends have sometimes inquired how I go about collecting. Every situation is unique, but I have selected one purchase as an example of my decision-making method—an exercise that follows research, study, consultations, and reflection. The object was a small, greenish jade Mughal cup with inscriptions on it (described on pages 62–65), shown to me by a London dealer. Here were my thoughts as I considered the jade:

The cup seems to be good. I wonder where the dealer got it. (I ask for and receive its provenance.) *A royal piece . . . this is what I'm after . . . form is strong . . . no chips or scratches. It's not as important as the Ibex cup I missed here a few years ago* (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum), *but even so it's fine. Is it "jade"?* *Yes. How rare are these cups?* (I inquire.) *So they are rare . . . I like them being dated. Will the inscription be of any interest to anyone? It still looks good . . . I must have it.* (I stare at it, examining it carefully.) *I can't see anything wrong with it. Why hasn't it been sold to a more important client?* (The dealer explains that he has only had it a short time, and that the Victoria and Albert Museum is in fact interested.) *I wonder what the price will be . . . will it be worth to me what I would pay for a small Olmec jade? . . . there is no question of its authenticity . . . there MUST be something wrong . . . otherwise I have in my hand a museum-quality piece. . . .* (I look again to find a fault.) *. . . The color isn't so good. . . .* (The dealer explains it probably suffered from overheating at one time, but that an "expert" had liked the resulting variety of color.) *I'll have to spend the money and get it. . . .* (I ask the price and reach an amicable agreement.)

Collecting is a search for the Holy Grail. If done well it provides memories of "silken lines and silver hooks." Each collector must fly his own kite. If it soars and shimmers in the bright blue sky, that is enough. If it falls with a crash at his feet, then that is too bad, but there are always other days, other winds, other skies of blue.

The game registers of Edwardian shooting estates are provocative documents celebrating abundance, variety, and the zeal of pursuit. Omitted from these records, though, are the grim aspects of the hunt: wounded birds flying away to die in agony, the screams of hares and other small animals. Similarly, art collecting has its darker side—little known, seldom mentioned. Successful purchases foster resentment, malice, and jealousy. Rules of the game are frequently ignored or abused. A few of those obsessed with enriching their own collections—or their purses—resort to thievery, smuggling, or worse. A dealer of my acquaintance was killed while competing with another for an Olmec jade.

A fine dealer lets his wares speak for themselves; most dealers drown their customers in a sea of jargon. Though many collectors consider Joseph Duveen to have been the greatest American art dealer, in my opinion that distinction belongs to Joseph Brummer, who was active in New York from 1914 until his death in 1947. Duveen capitalized on fashion; Brummer introduced museum directors and, through them, the public to new cultures.

Many collectors associate with their favorite museums—some as angels, some as “moles”! Of the many museum curators I have known, only a few deserve this epitaph (adapted from Tacitus): Worthy to collect, had he not collected.

Crocodile tears have been shed over the crassness of private collectors who buy art as an investment. There is nothing wrong with buying to make a profit, especially if it helps prevent Lowestoft to Lowestoft in three generations. The Guennol Collection is not an appropriate model for those intent on making a profit. They should rather buy only world-famous oils by established artists through important dealers or at celebrated auction sales. In this way they will build a valuable, profitable—and dull collection.

In art collecting Nature is the great teacher. Stephen Vincent Benét expressed it: “Art has no nations—but the mortal sky lingers like gold in immortality.” Beauty is not completely subjective. Proportion, color combinations, texture, novelty, among other criteria, determine whether or not an object is a true work of art. To define these characteristics further is difficult, if not impossible.

Some say that a collector must almost literally crawl over an object, like a snail, to evaluate it properly. That is nonsense—it is the totality of the piece that counts.

Certain aficionados rate the types of objects others collect, giving the highest marks to classic Greek carvings, the lowest to barbed wire. Owners of paintings consider themselves a sect apart, superior beings looking down at lesser breeds of collectors. Arts not fashionable at the moment are ignored by many. Today Meissen is in, French porcelain disdained. English furniture takes second place to French. Etchings are out. Icons, dolls, coins, and photographs are gaining favor. These passing prejudices have little merit. Almost all art is collectible: musical instruments, arms and armor, paperweights, and even books. The fundamental rule is: if something gives you pleasure, buy it. I buy, therefore I am!

In collecting, expert opinion must be accepted with caution. Once a group of government experts taking inventory of ancient monuments visited Plas Brondann, Sir Clough Williams-Ellis’s home in Wales. Excited by a derelict watchtower that they had found on the property, they sketched it and recorded appropriate measurements, then asked one of the farmhands if he could provide any historical information about the ruin. The good man replied, “Well, I don’t rightly know if it has much of a history as we ain’t finished it yet.”

Here are some maxims for collectors:

- Be tolerant of fellow collectors, even if they buy postage stamps.
- Collecting is an aggressive activity—like gathering nettles.
- Never buy merely to fill gaps in your collection. You are not working on a jigsaw puzzle.
- Collecting is simple only if one learns to choose between apples and oranges.
- Wealth will not provide the collector's touch or eye. If it is easy to buy everything, one may be less careful in undertaking the intellectual work required before making a decision.
- While some collectors gloat over their triumphs, the true royals may go unnoticed as they collect *in camera*.
- You can visit a dealer with plenty of money wrapped up in a five-pound note, but don't expect him to do anything but try to separate you from your funds.
- Integrity of collecting style is as important as the authenticity of each collected object. The surest way to discover whether something is fine or not is to take it home for a few days and by living with it learn if it was touched by the finger of God.
- Any art object entering a truly fine collection receives an automatic promotion.
- Today, inflation is a problem in collecting: how do you maintain quality in a rising market? The great collector cannot afford to buy anything that is not first rate. If you are unable to pay the price for the best in one category, move along to another, a category not frequented by the affluent.
- Begin with your second collection.
- The emperor Ch'ien-lung was asked why some of his treasures were important. He replied, "By my wish they are superior." Perhaps he hit the nail on the head. In any case, his answer is mine.

The preservation of native art is desirable, but often it has been better accomplished elsewhere than in the object's land of origin. Local religions must be respected, and Indian material of the Southwest has ceremonial significance. A Santa Fe dealer sold me a group of stone figures used by the Pueblo Indians in their religious ceremonies. On three occasions he had been offered this lot. Twice he purchased the pieces. Twice he returned them to the kiva whence they originated. The third time he didn't. I didn't. Most countries have their share of such stories, and it is obvious that local inhabitants are not always as anxious to preserve their heritage as some would have us believe.

Society has a responsibility to art, not the other way around. Private and public collections do not have to be justified on educational or other utilitarian grounds. An art object requires love, attention, and understanding. It is like the little orphan who poked a note through the iron fence, saying, "Whoever finds this note—I love you."

Collecting is a youthful activity usually practiced by the old. When one

is young the days pass slowly; there is time to burn. Later the days accelerate and one anticipates a final destination. As the years flash by each moment becomes increasingly precious. Perhaps there are more important things to be accomplished than adding to one's art collection. With age the collector tends to be more cautious—less passionate in the pursuit of treasures. This is not to denigrate the collector who pursues his hobby in the Indian summer of his life. He is then unquestionably more qualified, for he has seen much and learned more. But a certain flair, the drive to snare something fine, the bursts of intuitive purchasing may now be missing. Regardless of his age, the serious collector must take time by the forelock. The Guennol Collection is my fountain of youth.

This volume lists a few things my wife and I obtained many years ago when we were younger, such as the paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder, who is in my view America's greatest artist. But most of the pieces were acquired more recently and after the publication of the first volume. Perhaps the finest work in this volume is the Chinese Shang dynasty jade bear. For us it takes the biscuit. Our collecting criteria are unusual. For example, the Fabergé elephant: how could we have collected this Russian elephant after buying such things as the copper-alloy ax, the Olmec jades, and the Cycladic marble? Fabergé is fashionable. The market for Fabergé is controlled. Is this elephant a cuckoo's egg in the Guennol nest or does it qualify as a fine art object? It is rare, especially because of its size. The craftsmanship is superb. *Materiem superabat opus*. It was once owned by a member of what Queen Victoria called the "royal mob." Among other qualities, it has humor.

The Penitente death cart is more frightening than artistic, more appalling than appealing. The figure is repulsive, sitting in its little cart like some obscene insect, everything distorted. Personally removed from any religious associations with the cart, we came to find this carving more comic than grim; we grew accustomed to its grisliness.

The collection contains a few objects now almost completely out of fashion: the gold London drinking vessel, the South American toucan-feathered headband, and the Eastern Woodlands wooden spoon. The Ife head is appreciated today but was less admired when we obtained it. The same may be said for the Northwest Coast wooden crest frontlet.

We especially prize the Guennol folk art carvings, because they are vibrantly American. Our favorites are the decoys.

Only one Hawaiian piece appears in our collection: a whale-ivory hook pendant. Polynesian art is wonderful. As Terence Barrow states in his informative book *Art and Life in Polynesia*, "The story of the Polynesians has many chapters, and none is more meaningful to modern man than that concerning the arts. It reveals a way of life, remote from modern man yet pregnant with ideas, and a new aesthetic that have contributed much to modern art via Paul Gauguin, Matisse, Picasso, and other artists."

The Chinese Neolithic ax deserves attention. It has been softly polished by the sands of time.

The coral-handle knives from the Green Vaults of Dresden may not interest every reader, but their provenance adds to their importance. The unicorn drinking cup has religious and mystical significance. Odell Shepard, in *The Lore of the Unicorn*, explains the fall of this fabulous beast: "The legend of the unicorn was assailed three centuries ago on the side of fact, and it gradually withered because there was no longer any sufficient capacity for a faith unsustained by the senses. That attack could never have been made if the unicorn had not first been dragged from the fastnesses of the imagination to take his chances in the mob of animals whose only claim upon our attention is that they happen to exist."

The kachina doll is our Petrushka, thumbing his nose, knowing he is forever and we are only for a day.

The Guennol catalogue is a Baedeker: in these two volumes America joins Egypt, India, Greece, Hawaii, and other distant lands. The Guennol things are silent companions. They transport us to temples and tombs, palaces and humble huts. Through these works of art the past meets the present in a Lotus-land of beauty.

Chess analysts write about the extreme "depth" of some moves made by grand masters. In this catalogue, as in the first, several objects are extremely "deep." They are the white whales and they sing the songs of paradise.

A. B. M.

The Guennol Collection

Early Art

ROBERT S. BIANCHI
PRUDENCE O. HARPER
DIETRICH VON BOTHMER
FRANK WILLETT

Marble Figurine

This statuette is the largest and certainly one of the finest examples of a class of early Bronze Age figurines found in Anatolia.¹ The deliberate abstraction of the human body is particularly appropriate for the representation of a subject that undoubtedly had an important symbolic meaning.

The frontal nude female, standing with legs together and forearms bent upward against the chest, is made of marble, which was polished in antiquity. The disk-shaped head is large in proportion to the body and is further emphasized by being set at an angle to the vertical plane of the figure. The head was broken off at the base, but it has been reattached to the body. Eyes, nose, and ears are represented. Brown calcite encrusts the back of the statuette. The closest parallel is a piece about six and three-quarter inches high, formerly in the Museum of Primitive Art, New York.²

The source of the small group of female figurines to which the Guennol example belongs is generally believed to be western Anatolia.³ Fragments from Troy II⁴ in the north, and from Aphrodisias⁵ in the south, are the only sculptures of this type of known provenance. The type is often referred to under the name of Kilia, a town on the Gallipoli Peninsula that was allegedly the findspot of the earliest published figure.⁶

The stylized geometric body and the slightly upward tilt of the head relate this class of figurine to Cycladic marble idols of the early Bronze Age. The ears of the Anatolian figures, set back on the head and protruding outward, have been compared to statuettes of the Chalcolithic period found in Bulgaria.⁷ There are, however, no exact parallels in the Cyclades or farther west in the Balkans for the Anatolian marble sculptures.

Although this class of objects is generally uniform in overall appearance and style, the representation of details varies considerably. On the Guennol example, the forearms are modeled in relief, but sometimes the sharply bent arms are not distinguished from the rest of the torso, and paint may have given definition to the forms.⁸ Ears and nose are customarily represented, although eyes, which appear on this and other examples as small raised dots, are not always shown. The large pubic triangle is sometimes traversed vertically by the line separating the legs, but this area was also commonly left plain.

The body of the Guennol figurine is particularly well proportioned. Often on these small marble sculptures the line of the hips is at the level of the elbows, causing the legs to be unnaturally elongated. Alternatively, the hip line is placed low on the body and the legs become stubby appurtenances. The one surviving foot on the Guennol



*Marble
Figurine*

statuette is separated by a narrow space from the missing second foot. This clear division of the feet is characteristic, but it increases the fragility of the object in this area; consequently, many of these figures are now broken at the ankle.

In the most recent publication of the Anatolian group,⁹ the idols are attributed to the early Bronze II period (about 2700–2400 B.C.). Without information concerning the original archaeological context of the discoveries a precise dating is impossible, and questions remain concerning the significance and use of the Anatolian figures beyond the association with a fertility cult.

P.O.H.

MARBLE FIGURINE

Height, 9 inches; width, 3¾ inches

Anatolia, early Bronze II period (about 2700–2400 B.C.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Elisabeth Rohde, "Die frühbronzezeitlichen Kykladenfigure der Berliner Antiken-Sammlung," *Forschungen und Berichte*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 16, 1975, p. 154, n. 8.

NOTES

1. The piece is cited in an article by Elisabeth Rohde ("Die frühbronzezeitlichen Kykladenfigure der Berliner Antiken-Sammlung," *Forschungen und Berichte*, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 16, 1975, p. 154, n. 8). I am grateful to Joan Mertens for calling my attention to this reference. Jürgen Thimme, in a written communication, gave the following opinion: "Ich habe keinen Zweifel, dass das Guennol-Exemplar auf Grund seiner ungewöhnlichen Grosse, seiner Qualität und seiner guten Erhaltung heute als Top-Stück der ganzen Gruppe gelten darf." ("I have no doubt that the Guennol example—because of its exceptional size, its quality, and its good condition—must be considered the top piece of the whole group.")

2. *Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me*, The Jewish Museum, New York, 1964, no. 118. Another comparable piece is in the Norbert Schimmel Collection; see *Ancient Art, The Norbert Schimmel Collection*, ed. Oscar White Muscarella, Mainz, 1974, no. 8.

3. *Kunst und Kultur der Kykladeninseln im 3. Jahrtausend v. Chr.*, ed. Jürgen Thimme, Badisches Landesmuseum, Karlsruhe, 1976, pp. 182, 402, 403, 562, 563, figs. 560–66. This publication contains a comprehensive discussion of this subject and full bibliography. Sixteen examples of this type are known at present.

4. Hubert Schmidt, *Heinrich Schliemann's Sammlung trojanischer Altertümer*, Berlin, 1902, p. 282, no. 7643. See *Kunst und Kultur*, p. 182.

5. Barbara Kadish, "Prehistoric Remains at Aphrodisias 1968 and 1969," *American Journal of Archaeology* 75, April 1971, p. 129, ill. 8. See *Kunst und Kultur*, p. 562, for questions concerning the dating of the Aphrodisias finds in the Chalcolithic period.

6. *Kunst und Kultur*, p. 182; John L. Caskey, "The Figurine in the Roll-top Desk," *American Journal of Archaeology*, 76, April 1972, pp. 192–93, pl. 44.

7. *Kunst und Kultur*, pp. 182–83, fig. 178.

8. *Kunst und Kultur*, p. 562.

9. See notes 3 and 5.

Copper-alloy Ax

This skillfully executed weapon combines functional design and figural decoration. The craftsman transformed an ax into an animal sculpture by outlining the two central holes—which originally held pins to secure the weapon to the shaft—to give them the appearance of eyes. The counterblade was also shaped into a sweeping openwork form to suggest hair or plumes. A ridge runs down the center of the blade and divides into two branches, which extend toward the edge. Since the edge is not sharpened, the ax was probably intended to be used as a striking weapon rather than as a cutting tool. The slim, oval socket increases in breadth at the base. On one side the rivet hole in the shaft is framed by a lozenge and on the other by a pointed oval.

Weapons of this particular type are among finds made in eastern Iran, near Kerman,¹ and at Shahdad in the desert of Lut.² The greatest quantity, however, come from sites in northern Afghanistan.³ This area, now largely desert but once fertile land, has yielded the closest parallels and is probably the source of the Guennol piece.

The distinctive curve of the counterblade is a feature not only of this weapon and others from Afghanistan but also of weapons of various types found in southwest Iran, at Susa⁴ and Luristan.⁵ On these examples, chiefly hammers and axes, the surface of the counterblade is decorated with a chased pattern of feathers or is molded in relief to form long plumes curling at the ends. Heads of birds and fantastic creatures protrude from the socket. The presence of this type of shaped counterblade on objects from Iran and Afghanistan indicates that contact of some sort existed between the two areas. The examples from southwest Iran date from the late third and early second millennium B.C. One hammer, or staff head, found at Susa is inscribed with the name Shulgi (2094–2047), a ruler of the third dynasty of Ur.⁶ Regrettably, none of the weapons from Afghanistan comparable to the Guennol ax is from a controlled excavation; all are from plundered graves. Comparisons with Elamite works suggest a date for the Guennol piece in the early or mid-second millennium B.C. Viktor I. Sarianidi, who directed the excavation and publication of much of the Bronze Age material from northern Afghanistan and southern Uzbekistan, has suggested that axes having this distinctive counterblade are either imports from Iran or, more probably, local products influenced by foreign types.⁷ Sarianidi observes that the form of one ax, typologically related to the Guennol piece, somewhat resembles the protome of a horse.⁸ This association with a horse rather than a bird or fantastic creature is supported by the presence of a horse protome above the blade on another ax of this kind once in the David-Weill Collection.⁹ The unusual

openwork treatment of the counterblade on the Guennol example was thus perhaps intended to portray hair rather than feathers.

The theriomorphic design of the Guennol ax suggests that it was more than just a functional weapon. Pierre Amiet has demonstrated that Elamite axes decorated with curling plumes or feathers were prestigious gifts presented by rulers to their subordinates. A scene depicting the presentation of this type of ax to a subject by a prince appears on a cylinder seal of an Elamite official, Kuk-Simut, who lived about 1900 B.C.¹⁰

Most of the recent Bronze Age finds from Afghanistan come from graves. The design of the Guennol ax suggests that it had a ceremonial rather than a purely practical function, and would have been an appropriate and meaningful tomb deposit. The graceful silhouette and balanced form of the weapon testify to the skill of the craftsman, and the distinctive design provides evidence of interconnections among peoples living in widely separated parts of the Bronze Age world.

P.O.H.

Copper-alloy Ax



COPPER-ALLOY AX

Length, 8½ inches

Northern Afghanistan, first half of the second millennium B.C.

EXHIBITED: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1978–82.

NOTES

1. Peter Calmeyer, *Datierbare Bronzen aus Luristan und Kirmanshah*, Berlin, 1969, pp. 182–83.
2. Ali Hakemi, *Catalogue de l'Exposition Lut: "Xabis" (Shahdad)*, Teheran, 1972, no. 243, pl. XXA.
3. Viktor I. Sarianidi, *Drevnie Zemledeltsi Afganistana*, Moscow, 1977, pp. 73–75, figs. 33, 34; Viktor I. Sarianidi, "Drevneishie topori Afganistana," *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya*, 1978, 2, pp. 186–94 (the Guennol ax is similar but not identical to Sarianidi's Type VI, subtype B); Viktor I. Sarianidi, "Bactrian Centre of Ancient Art," *Mesopotamia*, XII, 1977, pp. 108–9, figs. 64, 65; Pierre Amiet, "Bactriane Proto-historique," *Syria*, 54, 1977, pp. 111–12, pl. V.
4. Jean Deshayes, "Marteaux de bronze iraniens," *Syria*, 35, 1958, p. 287, fig. 3; Pierre Amiet, *Collection David-Weill: Les Antiquités du Luristan*, Paris, 1976, pp. 10–20.
5. Jean Deshayes, *Les Outils de bronze de l'Indus au Danube*, Paris, 1960, I, p. 439, no. 3088; II, pl. LII; Ernst Emil Herzfeld, *Iran in the Ancient East*, London and New York, 1941, p. 131, fig. 248.
6. Roland de Mecquenem, "Têtes de cannes susiennes en metal," *Revue d'Assyriologie*, 47, 1953, pp. 79–82, fig. 2.
7. Sarianidi, "Drevneishie topori Afganistana," p. 192; Sarianidi, "Bactrian Centre of Ancient Art," pp. 108–9, figs. 64, 65.
8. Sarianidi, "Drevneishie topori Afganistana," p. 192.
9. Amiet, *Collection David-Weill*, no. 29.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 20, fig. 21.

Terra-cotta Frog

The mythopoeic ancient Egyptians strove to explain natural phenomena in comprehensible terms that were based upon the observable world. Acute observation had taught the early mythographers that, despite the vagaries of the human condition, recurring, natural phenomena were immutable, constant, and invariable. At the same time, the Egyptians noted that the various species of the animal kingdom, as a subset within nature's scheme, also behaved predictably. Through a complex intellectual exercise, the Egyptians during the Neolithic period of the fourth millennium B.C. carefully matched different natural phenomena—which could ideally only be described in the abstract—with specific species in the animal kingdom. The abstract became

concrete and, more important, readily comprehensible to the uneducated agrarian masses of Egypt's rural population.

This process was neither uniform nor orthodox. Local traditions were strong and local mythologies often evolved along parallel, sometimes mutually contradictory, lines. The ancient Egyptians made few attempts to evolve canon tables in order to bring disparate cosmologies into accord. They accepted and, more significantly, remained loyal to tenets that the Western mind finds antithetical. This pluralistic approach to religion, devoid of Aristotelian categorization, remained in effect, with slight modification, for almost five thousand years, until an edict of Theodosius I in A.D. 379–95 proscribed all pagan cults and banned their practice.

Although the ancient Egyptians gave natural phenomena tangible expression by equating them with the animal kingdom, they never practiced zoölatry. They did not revere each member of every species as a deity incarnate, although on occasion they did select one particular living beast for that role. The various animals merely served as constant reminders of the deities. In time, these animals were transformed into the anthropomorphic deities—many of whom were represented with the head of an animal on a human body—that figured in later historical epochs.

The frog was viewed as a primeval being that had burst spontaneously into life from the alluvial silt, when the floods of the Nile subsided. Through careful study of various species of the order *Batrachia ecaudata*, the ancient Egyptians painstakingly recorded the frog's external characteristics. It was not the artists' intent to reproduce a replica of a specific frog, but to create an image that embodied the salient characteristics of the species in a general way. Thus conceived, the resulting frog was an idealization without the stigma of imperfections found in nature. The ideal frog became an immutable and permanent vehicle, personified as the Egyptian frog goddess Hekat, whose eternal characteristics she carried. Frog amulets of Hekat were interred with the deceased to insure resurrection; mummies of actual frogs, common at Thebes, were left by pious pilgrims as votive offerings for the same end.

Within the pluralism of the ancient Egyptian religion the frog served also as a New Year's gift, to insure the resurgence of the oncoming calendrical cycle. By extension the frog symbolized rejuvenation as well, since resurrection—the beginning of a new cycle—could be construed as a return to a more vigorous state.

The frog in the Guennol Collection dates from the Predynastic period of ancient Egypt, a formative time that first gave plastic expression to the mythopoeic exercise. In this clay example, the characteristics of the ideal frog, based on nature, are abstracted and subordinated in a design that emphasizes the "frogness" of the sculpture. The Egyptian artist worked with plastic, sculptural forms, relying on volume and plane and employing line and incision for secondary details. In a profile view, the pleasing, undulating contour focuses the spectator's attention on the head. Snout, nostrils, and eyes are incised as expected; the



*Terra-cotta
Frog*

hindquarters are modeled in high relief. The design is not interrupted by an anatomically accurate rendering of either foreleg or hind leg. The complete absence of the subgular vocal sac, common in males of the species, indicates that the Guennol frog is a female. As such, it is one of the earliest and most enchanting representations of the goddess Hekat.

R.S.B.

TERRA-COTTA FROG

Height, 2 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches; length, 3 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Abydos, Nagada II period (3300–3100 B.C.)

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1958.

Marble Head

This large head with its severe forms is among the earliest sculptures in the Guennol Collection. It is said to be from the island of Herakleia, which lies between Naxos, Amorgos, and Ios, in the Aegean group of the Cyclades. Although hundreds of small Cycladic marble idols have survived, full-size figures are exceedingly rare: of the few that have been preserved, only one, in Athens, is complete;¹ among the others there is a torso, and two or three heads, broken off from statues, of which the Guennol head is the largest.

The head is biconvex, sharply carinated on the sides, and flat on top. (The upper part was broken and has been reattached.) The neck is cylindrical. Of the features, only the nose and the ears are rendered sculpturally. Since the head is somewhat weathered, no trace of paint is visible. A head in the Louvre, from Amorgos, of similar shape and size, serves as a convenient parallel.² Its surface is smooth and some lines of matte paint are preserved. Twin lines rise from the carinated sides of the head at the level of the ears and form an arch over the forehead, thus clearly indicating that the head is shown wearing a headdress, or *polos*. Horizontal lines below the front of the polos may stand for hair. It is difficult to say whether the eyes and the mouth were also painted and whether there were tattoo marks on the cheeks, as on another, larger head from Amorgos that is now in Athens.³

The complete statue in Athens was also found on Amorgos. Because the statue is of a woman, and its head is similar in type to the Guennol and Louvre heads, the surviving heads may all be from statues of women.

Colin Renfrew identified the Guennol head as one of the Spedos variety—named after a cemetery on Naxos—a member of the early group.⁴ In terms of chronology the head can be attributed to phase II of the Early Cycladic period, and dated roughly between 2700 and 2400 B.C.

D. v. B.

MARBLE HEAD

Height, 12¼ inches; width, 6⅜ inches; depth, 5 inches

Greece, Early Cycladic II period, Spedos type (about 2700–2400 B.C.)

PROVENANCE: Said to be from Herakleia.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Dietrich von Bothmer, *Ancient Art from New York Private Collections*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1961, p. 19, no. 88, pl. 28; Jürgen Thimme, *Art and Culture of the Cyclades*, Karlsruhe, 1977, p. 279, fig. 199a, b, p. 476, no. 199; Dietrich von Bothmer and Joan R. Mertens, *Greek*



*Marble Head:
front and
side views*

Art of the Aegean Islands, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1979, p. 58, no. 13, ill. p. 56.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 35; *Greek Art of the Aegean Islands*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 1, 1979–February 10, 1980, no. 13; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1955.

NOTES

1. Athens 3978, height, 58½ inches: Stanley Casson, *The Technique of Early Greek Sculpture*, Oxford, 1933, pl. opp. p. 15, fig. 3; Christian Zervos, *L'Art en Grèce des temps préhistoriques au début du XVIII^e siècle*, Paris, 1934, fig. 7; Jürgen Thimme, *Art and Culture of the Cyclades*, Karlsruhe, 1977, p. 39, fig. 22.

2. Louvre 2108, height, 10⅝ inches: *Catalogue sommaire des marbres antiques*, Paris, 1922, pl. 22 top center; *Encyclopédie photographique de l'art*, 3, p. 132, figs. a, b;

Christian Zervos, *L'Art des Cyclades*, Paris, 1957, pp. 132–35, figs. 159–61; Thimme, *Art and Culture of the Cyclades*, p. 280, fig. 200.

3. Athens 3909, height, 11⅞ inches: *Athenische Mitteilungen*, XVI, 1891, pp. 46 ff.; Zervos, *L'Art en Grèce*, figs. 21, 22.

4. Personal communication to D.v.B.

Fragment of a Marble Grave Relief

The group on this fragment of a Pentelic marble must originally have represented three figures: a seated one facing left; a standing figure in the background, with the head probably frontal; and a standing youth facing right and clasping the hand of the seated figure. Most of the standing youth, a fold of the dress worn by the figure in the background, and the right hand and part of the arm of the seated figure are preserved. The fragment, broken in two, is stained and discolored in parts. Some of the folds of the garment and the thumb and arm of the seated figure are damaged.

The standing youth wears a himation over his left shoulder; some folds bunched under his right armpit serve as a cushion for the staff on which he leans. His weight rests on the staff and on his right leg while the left leg is flexed, and the back of his ankle and heel appear in the lower-left corner of the fragment. His head, to judge by the remnants of the neck, was slightly inclined. The seated figure was probably a woman, perhaps his mother. As the gable of the relief is missing we do not know the figures' names, which would have been inscribed on the epistyle.

The Guennol carving, comparable in style to the relief of Hippomachos and Kallias (in the Piraeus Museum)¹ that dates from early in the fourth century B.C., is also close in modeling and composition to the unpublished fragment of an Attic grave relief in Laon (formerly in the P. Marguerite de la Charlonie Collection), which shows a man standing at the left clasping the hand of a seated figure, probably a woman.

D.v.B.

FRAGMENT OF A MARBLE GRAVE RELIEF

Height, 42½ inches; width, 21½ inches

Greece, early 4th century B.C.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Dietrich von Bothmer, "Four Attic Grave Reliefs," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XI, 7, March 1953, pp. 186–89, ill. p. 188; Dietrich von



*Fragment of
a Marble
Grave Relief*

Bothmer, *Ancient Art from New York Private Collections*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1961, p. 27, no. 110, pl. 34.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 40; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1952.

NOTES

1. Hans Diepolder, *Die attischen Grabreliefs des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts vor Christus*, Berlin, 1931, pl. 23.

Terra-cotta Ife Head

This head, from Ife, Nigeria, is approximately two-thirds life size and appears to be broken from a figure. It is unfortunately incomplete, lacking the back, both ears, and most of the right side of the face. It is a typical example, however, of the highest quality of naturalistic sculpture of the Classical period of Ife art, dating from about the twelfth to the fifteenth centuries A.D. The striations on the face probably represent an obsolete scarification pattern.¹ Similar but finer marks appear on the lower lip. The corners of the mouth and the nostrils are deeply impressed. A groove runs parallel to the edge of the upper eyelid, which overlaps both ends of the lower one. The hair is represented by an area standing slightly proud of the face and covered with rows of impressed dots.

The early history of this head is intriguing but obscure. When the German traveler Leo Frobenius visited the Nigerian city of Ife in 1910, he wrote accounts of his sensational discoveries of naturalistic sculpture which were published in German newspapers. He claimed that the British colonial administrators were completely and culpably ignorant of these treasures. Charles Hercules Read of The British Museum responded with a short article, "Plato's 'Atlantis' re-discovered," in *The Burlington Magazine* (1910–11, pp. 330–35) in which he illustrated (p. 331, A, B) a plaster cast of an Ife head in terra-cotta that he said was in the possession of The British Museum. Read remarks that the piece "comes from Ife, though details are lacking" (p. 335), but he unfortunately gives no indication of how The British Museum acquired the cast nor who owned the original. It is a cast of the piece that is now in the Guennol Collection, although Read's plate A shows the right cheek restored—the color is different and the line of the junction is quite clear. It is not possible to determine from the illustration whether the cast had been made from a restored original or whether the restoration had been done on the plaster cast.²

The original piece received its first public showing in the exhibition *Masterpieces of African Art* at The Brooklyn Museum, from October 21, 1954, to January 2, 1955. It was lent by the J.J. Klejman Gallery, New York, whose owner refused to divulge, either to Bernard Fagg, Director of the Nigerian Department of Antiquities, or later to the present writer, how it came into his hands. He did tell me that the cast in The British Museum was originally classified as Romanesque, and that details of how it came to be in the museum were known—including the fact that the original was presented in Nigeria to some well-known person whose name was recorded. These details Klejman said he had passed on to Alastair Bradley Martin, probably on the invoice, yet the invoice, dated May 24, 1954, throws no light on the matter; it merely cites three references to the piece in the literature and states, “There is a cast of a head, made around 1905, still kept in the British Museum. (Letter from William Fagg, Keeper, British Museum).”³ In a letter to Klejman, dated April 27, 1954, William Fagg states only that The British Museum has “had a plaster cast since the early years of this century (certainly before 1910).” At the top of the invoice is a manuscript endorsement: “Said to be one of 2 such items to have been *legally* exported from Nigeria—ABM ’71.” It is not relevant here to pursue the number of legally exported Ife works, but certainly the cast was in The British Museum before any attempt was made to control the export of Ife antiquities. It would seem reasonable to infer that the original work had been exported before Frobenius’s exploits of 1910–11 led the colonial authorities to attempt to control the removal of such antiquities.

Martin recalls that Klejman assured him that “it came out of Africa as a gift to a Catholic priest or someone like that and that he [Klejman] had purchased it from Denmark.”⁴ If the head had, indeed, been given to a Catholic priest, the priest was not stationed in Ife where, according both to Oloye M.A. Fabunmi⁵ and to M.A. Makinde⁶ the first Catholic mission was established in 1918. In a letter dated July 12, 1977, William Fagg writes, “I heard that it had been in England for many years but that Klejman found it in France(?)” Presumably, during the first decade of the twentieth century the head traveled from Nigeria to Britain, where the cast in The British Museum was probably made. After that we have no knowledge of the piece until it came into Klejman’s hands at an uncertain time and place.

A number of sites in Ife have produced terra-cotta sculpture in the same style. Unless the piece was discovered by accident in the ground, in the course of farming or building, it seems most likely to have been collected from the Iwinrin Grove in Ife, where a large number of sculptures stood exposed in the early part of the century (until the Public Works Engineer “Taffy” Jones provided a building to shelter them and a wooden box in which to store them, some time before 1931, when they were photographed by the Ife District Officer H.L. Ward-Price.)⁷ In 1934, the *oni* (“king”) of Ife, Adesoji Aderemi, had the sculptures brought into the palace for safekeeping, as a preliminary step toward establishing the Museum of Ife Antiquities, where they are now

kept. Kenneth Murray, the first Surveyor of Antiquities for the Federal Government of Nigeria, was told by one of his informants that, formerly, the sculptures were far more numerous, so that the Guennol head may be merely one of the many pieces that were removed. Several years ago, The British Museum owned fragments of the terra-cotta stool group from the Iwinrin Grove,⁸ thus confirming that pieces have been removed from the site.⁹

Until recently this was the only Ife terra-cotta head known to be in private hands (the American William Bascom owned two bronze heads from 1939 to 1950, when they were returned to the Ife Museum) and thus was more readily available for loan to temporary exhibitions than those in the Ife Museum and The British Museum (the Museum of Mankind). Consequently this head has been shown frequently, although since June 1954, between exhibitions, it has been housed in The Brooklyn Museum, where it is now featured in the reorganized exhibition installed in 1976. The piece was purchased from Klejman on December 27, 1954.

F. W.



*Terra-cotta
Ife Head*

TERRA-COTTA IFE HEAD

Height, 5½ inches

Nigeria, Classical period (12th–15th centuries A.D.)

PROVENANCE: Possibly from the Iwinrin Grove in Ife, Oyo State.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Charles Hercules Read, "Plato's 'Atlantis' Re-discovered," *The Burlington Magazine*, XVIII, 1910–11, pp. 330–35, ill. p. 331 (A, B, a'cast); William Fagg and Leon Underwood, "An Examination of the So-called Olokun Head of Ife, Nigeria," *Man*, XLIX, 1, 1949; William Fagg, "De l'art des Yoruba" in *Présence Africaine*, X–XI: *L'Art Nègre*, Paris, 1951, p. 112; Eliot Elisofon and William Fagg, *The Sculpture of Africa*, London, 1958, pl. 4; Frank Willett, "Ife and its Archaeology," *Journal of African History*, I, 1960, p. 235, repr. in *Papers in African Prehistory*, ed. R. Oliver and J.D. Fage, Cambridge, 1970, p. 307; Walter Drayer and Andreas Lommel, *Nigeria: 2000 Jahre Afrikanischer Plastik*, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, 1962, p. 53, pl. 9; William Fagg, *Nigerian Images*, London, 1963, pl. 3; Warren M. Robbins, *African Art in American Collections*, New York, 1966, pl. 171; Frank Willett, *Ife in the History of West African Sculpture*, London, 1967, p. 13; Pierre Meauzé, *African Art: Sculpture*, Cleveland and New York, 1968, pp. 88, 89–98, colorplate p. 89; *Dictionnaire des Civilisations Africaines*, ed. Fernand Hazan, Paris, 1968, ill. p. 213; Ekpo Eyo, *Two Thousand Years Nigerian Art*, Lagos, 1977, p. 102; Thomas P.F. Hoving, "Valuables and Ornamental Items: The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alastair Bradley Martin," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXVIII, 3, November 1969, pp. 147–60, ill. p. 159.

EXHIBITED: *Masterpieces of African Art*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, October 21, 1954–January 2, 1955, no. 113; *Nigerian Tribal Art*, The Arts Council of Great Britain, London, October 5–November 5, 1960, no. 7, Manchester, November 26–December 31, 1960, Bristol, January 21–February 25, 1961; *Nigeria: 2000 Jahre Plastik*, Städtische Galerie im Lenbachhaus, Munich, September 29, 1961–January 7, 1962, Kunsthalle, Basel, January 29–February 18, 1962, no. 9; *Afrika: 100 Stämme—100 Meisterwerke* ("Africa: 100 Tribes—100 Masterpieces"), Hochschule für bildende Künste, Berlin, September 12–October 4, 1964; *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 10; *The Sculpture of Black Africa: Nigeria and Cameroon*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, June–August, 1971; *Terra Cottas South of the Sahara*, Detroit Institute of Arts, November 21, 1972–January 21, 1973, no. 44; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1955.

NOTES

1. The evidence for this is discussed in Frank Willett, *Ife in the History of West African Sculpture*, London, 1967, pp. 22–33, and captions, pls. 13, 14, 31, 32–35.
2. Unfortunately, since the Department of Ethnography left the Bloomsbury premises of The British Museum to become the Museum of Mankind at Burlington Gardens, with separate stores at Orsman Road, it has not been possible to locate the piece for verification.
3. In the caption to pl. 3, *Nigerian Images*, London, 1963, William Fagg remarks that "a plaster cast of it has been in the British Museum since about 1900."
4. Letter from Alastair Bradley Martin to Frank Willett, April 26, 1977.
5. Oloye M.A. Fabunmi, *Itan Ibere Esin Kristi ni Ile-Ife ati Agbegbe*, Ile-Ife, 1970, p. 45.
6. M.A. Makinde, *Ile-Ife: An Introduction*, Ibadan, Nigeria, 1970, p. 32.
7. Reproduced in William Fagg and Margaret Plass, *African Sculpture: An Anthology*, London and New York, 1964, p. 60.
8. Willett, *Ife in the History of African Sculpture*, pl. 76.
9. Unfortunately, like the cast of the Guennol head, these fragments were mislaid some time before the move from Bloomsbury, and have not since come to light.

Post-Medieval Art

ALASTAIR BRADLEY MARTIN

HENRY GRÜNTAL

YVONNE HACKENBROCH

HANNS SWARZENSKI

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Post-Medieval Art

*“Aren’t they beautiful?” the girl asked,
as she breathed in the spicy scent of the flowers.*

*“I suppose so,” answered the Scarecrow. “When
I have brains I shall probably like them better.”*

—Lyman Frank Baum (1856–1919)

That authoritative and indispensable masterwork, *The Oxford English Dictionary*, defines *serendipity* as “the faculty of making happy and unexpected discoveries by accident.” That single word may well be the aptest way of describing the process of assembling the highly varied objects from the post-Medieval era to be found on the succeeding pages.

Imagine the unexpected pleasure of the confirmed collector who, in many cases, almost literally stumbles upon a major discovery, such as an attractive seventeenth-century piece while browsing or searching for something entirely different from another century. Some of the Guennol works of art were found months—or even years—after hope had been abandoned that an excellent example of a particular genre, or any example at all, could be found.

The one element that unified this group of objects was the combination on the part of the collectors of an unbridled curiosity for the unique and the desire to maintain a high standard of excellence among the acquisitions, no matter which medium the artist or artisan had mastered. One might compare the assembled works with those highly dissimilar objects to be found in the continental *Wunderkammer* treasuries of bygone days. These contained such unlikely bedfellows as sharks with one ear, palm nuts, sea dragons, nautilus shells, and intricate Baroque carvings, either in wood or ivory. Yet this present reflection of serendipity, I think we could say in all modesty, is of a much higher level of artistry. Whether it was a sixteenth-century

hunting horn by Léonard Limousin; a copper-gilt, enamel, and diamond Danish Order of the Elephant, containing the cipher of King Frederick IV of Denmark; or, by marked contrast, a fine wooden angel's head by Franz Ignaz Günther, the pleasure of discovery was immense. Putting together such a heterogeneous assortment of treasures fulfills one's romantic needs, as do the sounds of trains and wolves in the night; the sight of Vermejo Park, Cornwall's Tintagel Castle, or Yorkshire's Fountains Abbey; the feel of Olmec jades; the fragrance of balsam. This section of the book is, in fact, the Black Forest of the Guennol realm.

Needless to say, the temptation to put some of these objects into occasional, if not daily, use was great, for this is what provides the incurable romantic collector with the ultimate satisfaction. However, all our treasures went into a twentieth-century version of a "magpiety" *Wunderkammer*, and there they will remain.

What follows is an exotic place, an isle of amber populated with mora trees and giant spiders.

A. B. M.

Bronze Medal of Niccolò Piccinino

by Antonio Pisanello

Niccolò Piccinino (1386–1444) of Perugia was among the greatest military captains of his time. Piccinino learned his craft of arms from another native of Perugia, Andrea Braccio da Montone (1368–1424), reputed to have been the best *condottiere* of his time. At Braccio's death—from wounds sustained in the battle of Aquila—Piccinino succeeded to his command. At the peak of his career, between 1438 and 1441, as chief general for Filippo Maria Visconti, duke of Milan, he could rightly have been considered master of Italy. He was adopted into the Visconti family about 1439, but in 1441 or 1442, as his power declined, he transferred from Milanese service and assumed command for King Alfonso V of Naples, by whom, in turn, he was also adopted.

The relatively brief period (1439–42) in which Piccinino used the name of Visconti provides the approximate date for the Guennol medal. Sir George Hill assigns the medal more precisely to the end of 1441 and early 1442, when Pisanello was in Milan and Pavia.¹ From this period also came Pisanello's medals of Visconti and of Francesco I Sforza. His medal of Piccinino accordingly reflects very closely the artist's world of patronage, as well as the larger arenas of politics and war.

According to Hill's chronology, this medal represents Pisanello's pioneering work in the medium. The artist was already well established as a draftsman by 1438, with several large works to his credit. The visit of Emperor John VIII Palaeologus to Ferrara between February 1438 and January 1439 was the occasion for Pisanello's first medal. While there are prototypes in the large medallions of the Late Roman Empire, and analogues in the cast medallions of Constantine and Heraclius that are known from the early fifteenth century, Pisanello's portrait of John VIII marks the substantive beginning of the medal as an art form of the Renaissance. The artist's signature as *pictor* ("painter") is typical of his pride in draftsmanship. Particularly characteristic of Pisanello are the massive headdress on the obverse and the emblematic use of a boldly modeled animal on the reverse. (Each of the devices is prominent in Pisanello's early medallion work—the portraits of John VIII, Visconti, and Sforza²—and each recurs in subsequent medals.)

The heraldic griffin of Perugia on the reverse is suckling the infants Braccio and Piccinino. Although the basic type is borrowed from the ancient statue of the *Capitoline Wolf* with Romulus and Remus in Rome (Palazzo dei Conservatori), the substitution of a winged figure is rooted in archaic Greek sculpture.

Two drawings, one in the Pinacoteca Civica at Brescia and the other in the Vallardi Collection in the Louvre, are associated with this medallion portrait of Piccinino. In her catalogue raisonné of the drawings



*Bronze Medal of
Niccolò Piccinino:
left, obverse;
right, reverse*

of Pisanello and his followers, Fossi Todorow considers that the drawings were made from the medal, after Pisanello's time.

Hill's *Corpus* lists thirteen specimens of this medal. One was formerly in the J. Pierpont Morgan Collection, and another is in The Samuel H. Kress Collection at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. The Guennol example is unusually well preserved, and, unlike those in The British Museum and the Morgan Collection, it is unpierced.

H.G.

BRONZE MEDAL OF NICCOLÒ PICCININO by Antonio Pisanello

Diameter, 3½ inches

Milan or Pavia, Italy, 1441–42

EX COLL.: Münzen and Medaillen A.G., Basel; purchased 1955.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Henry Grünthal, "Picininus Medal by Pisanello," *American Numismatic Society Museum Notes*, 7, 1957, pp. 255–56, pl. 43; Thomas P.F. Hoving, "Valuables and Ornamental Items: The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alastair Bradley Martin," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXVIII, 3, November 1969, pp. 146–60.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 129; The American Numismatic Society, New York, since 1955.

NOTES

1. Sir George Francis Hill, *The Commemorative Medal in the Service of Germany*, London and New York, 1917, no. 19.
2. Ibid., nos. 19, 21, 22.

Limoges Hunting Horn

by Léonard Limousin

Few Limoges enamels of the sixteenth century are as rare as this hunting horn, which bears the signature of Léonard Limousin and the date of 1538. Its early history is not recorded, but we know that during the eighteenth century it had been purchased by one of the most distinguished art collectors in England, Sir Horace Walpole of Strawberry Hill. (Walpole first published it in 1774.)

The enameled horn, enclosing a natural cow horn, consists of four sections joined by narrow silver bands, two of which are provided with rings for suspension. A silver mouthpiece at the narrow end makes the horn functional. The enamel colors on one side are dominated by shades of green and blue, composing a wooded landscape beneath a brilliant blue sky dotted with white cloud formations. The color scheme on the other side of the horn is a harmony of white enamel painted on a black ground, heightened with gold. Following the shape of the horn, the scenes are not only graduated in size but curved. Such curved surfaces pose considerable technical difficulty during and after firing; when handled by lesser masters, cracks form easily.

On the widest section of the horn appears Saint Hubert, bishop of Liège (d. 727), the patron saint of hunters. He kneels before the mystic stag of his vision, who bears a crucifix between his antlers. The saint, attired in a fashionable jacket painted bright red over gold foil, is accompanied by horse and hounds; a moated castle appears in the distance. On the section directly below him is a stag hunt. The animal at bay is attacked by hounds, who are followed by hunters, on foot and on horseback, with lances and swords.

This scene was derived from a woodcut by Lucas Cranach the Elder (1472–1553) of about 1506. Instead of German armor with plumed helmets for the hunters on horseback, and short leather jerkins and high boots for those on foot, Limousin's riders appear in tight-fitting Roman armor or in heroic nudity, and his hunters wear long jackets and short trousers cut in contemporary fashion. The composition of the actual attack, with one hound sinking his teeth into the hind leg of the distressed stag, has been adopted from Cranach without alteration. The boar hunt in the following section depicts a hunter sounding his horn while mounted hunters approach for the kill.

The reverse of the horn is also divided into four sections, with medallions surrounded by arabesques painted in grisaille. Beneath the figures of David and the slain Goliath in the medallion at the widest end of the horn is the inscription *DAVIT* and the date 1538. Behind them is a crowded battle scene. The next medallion shows David playing the lyre before King Saul; it is supported by two bearded and winged Satyrs



Limoges Hunting Horn: two views





Details of Limoges Hunting Horn: above, Saint Hubert; below, stag hunt



standing on cornucopias filled with fruit. (These Satyrs bear a striking resemblance to the personification of Tempus on the printer's mark of S. de Colines, found on title pages of books he printed in Paris in 1531.) Then follows a medallion with the bust of Cleopatra and the asp. The fourth and smallest medallion is a profile of a Roman emperor, with another male profile portrait discernible behind him.

About 1750 Sir Horace Walpole purchased the horn for the sum of five guineas. Thereafter it hung over the table in the refectory of his Gothicized country seat at Twickenham, near Richmond. It was there, at Strawberry Hill, that he formed his outstanding collection, specializing in the decorative arts to a degree far exceeding that of his contemporaries, whose main interest was paintings. In the *Catalogue of the Classic Contents of Strawberry Hill*, printed in 1774 and reprinted in 1784 on the private press that he had installed on his estate, Walpole described his entire collection in great detail. After his death in 1797, the sculptor Anne Seymour Damer (1749–1828), residuary legatee, inherited the horn, which, in 1842, was included in *The Valuable Contents of Strawberry Hill*, the sale conducted by George Robbins on “Monday, the 25th Day of April 1842, and twenty-three days (Sundays excepted).” In the “Prefatory Remarks” to that catalogue, the horn is described and illustrated with a woodcut by W.A. Delamotte: “. . . and over the table hangs an object of great curiosity and interest, a hunting horn of rich enamel, upon copper; the painting being on one side the History of St. Hubert, and on the other, a series of allegorical figures. The enamel is of that beautiful kind called Limoges, of which there are so many specimens in other parts of the house.”¹

The horn was sold on the nineteenth day, as lot 48, “The Valuables and Ornamental Items. In the Refectory”: “A singularly curious and beautiful HUNTING HORN, finely enamelled on one side, in colours, representing Allegorical Figures, on the other in Chiaro Scuro, with the history of St. Hubert. It is of the rare Limoges enamel and perfectly unique. It is undoubtedly one of the most remarkable gems of this rare collection, and has been highly prized by the connoisseur.”²

Contemporary newspapers and periodicals repeatedly emphasized the horn as a special feature of the sale. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, *The Illustrated London News*, and *Ainsworth's Magazine* all referred to it, and it was even considered worthy of lampooning. The pamphlet *Gooseberry Hall, The renowned Seat of Sir Hildebrod Gooseberry, Mr. Triptolemus Scattergoods*, includes a passage describing the following collector's item: “Over the chimney hangs a very large and curious cow's horn, covered with unintelligible hieroglyphics, supposed to signify that it was once the property of—the name is illegible—a celebrated Saxon swineherd.”³

Another burlesque appeared in *Punch—The London Charivari*, entitled, “Saffron Hill, the renowned seat of Fantail Joe, . . . Mr. Felix Clearcake is honoured by having been selected to sell by public competition. . . .”⁴ That such burlesques had a tradition in Georgian England is illustrated in a scene from *Marriage à la Mode* by Hogarth, where a blackamoor is removing objets d'art from a hamper, with a

booklet beside him, entitled, *A Catalogue of the Entire Collection of the late Sir Timothy Babyhouse to be sold by Auction*.

Records of the Strawberry Hill sale reveal that the horn brought 135 guineas, plus additional commissions and sundry expenses, which raised the price to £149 5s. for the successful bidder, Mr. Webb of Old Bond Street. Once more all traces of the horn were lost until it appeared again in the collection of Hollingworth Magniac, sold at Christie's July 2–4, 1892. It is described and illustrated in the catalogue as lot 403. The horn was acquired for the Guennol Collection in 1954 from a member of the Rothschild family in whose possession it had been since the 1892 sale.

This horn is a perfect example of Léonard Limousin's early style, when he first met François I at Fontainebleau and came under the spell of the art of the French court. Although, at least in part, he followed the custom of using graphic designs as a point of departure, he did so with a selective eye: in this case he reduced Cranach's crowded composition to fewer and larger figures, attired in costumes of more recent date. His interest in Italian Renaissance art is shown by the inclusion of medallions with characters from Roman history, depicted in a manner relating them to Roman coinage and cameos. With utter unconcern Limousin combined both religious and profane, ancient and contemporary themes, in a free spirit that was typical of the early Renaissance in France, but that would later be abandoned during the subsequent storm of religious persecution. Another sign of Italianate Renaissance culture under the reign of François I is the conspicuous *cartellino* below the David medallion, on which the signature LEONARDVS-LEMOVICVS is displayed in large letters.

Y.H.

LIMOGES HUNTING HORN by Léonard Limousin

Enamel over horn

Height, 7 inches; length, 12 inches

Limoges, France, dated 1538

EX COLL.: Horace Walpole, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham, England; sold April 25, 1842 (no. 48), to Mr. Webb of Old Bond Street, London; Anne Seymour Damer; Hollingworth Magniac; sold July 2–4, 1892 (no. 403, ill.), by Christie's, London, to Gustave de Rothschild, Paris; the Guennol Collection since 1954.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Horace Walpole, *Catalogue of the Classic Contents of Strawberry Hill*, 1774 and 1784, p. 4; *The Valuable Contents of Strawberry Hill, Collected by Horace Walpole*, catalogue of the sale conducted by George Robbins, April 25–May 20, 1842, London, no. 1048, pp. ix, 190, ill. p. ix; *Illustrated London News*, May 21, 1842, no. 2, p. 25; *Punch—The London Charivari*, II, 1842, p. 132 (a parody); *The Art Journal*, 1842, p. 283; "Treasures of Strawberry Hill, No. VI," *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 9, December 1842, p. 610; "A Miscellany of Romance," *Ainsworth's Magazine*, I, 1842, p. 101, ill.; Charles Blanc, *Le Trésor de la curiosité*, Paris, 1857, pp. cxxxi–1; L. Delisle, "Note sur les émaux de L. Limousin, provenant du Château d'Anet," *Bulletin de la Société des Antiquaires de France*, XIV, 1878, p. 158; L. Bourdery, "Léonard Limousin et son oeuvre," *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique et historique du Limousin*, 44, 1895, p. cxviii–ix;

Michael Ardant, *Emailliers et émaillerie de Limoges*, Paris, 1897; A. Ilg, "Die Limousiner Grisailen in der Kaiserlichen Haussammlung," *Wiener Jahrbuch für Kunstgeschichte*, 11, 1908, p. 110; J.-J. Marquet de Vasselot, "L'Orfèvrerie et l'émaillerie au XVI^e siècle" in A. Michel, *Histoire de l'Art*, V, Paris, 1912, p. 456; T. Raspe, "Die Aelteste Bildnismalerei Leonard Limousins," *Der Cicerone*, V, 1913, p. 173; P. Lavedan, *Léonard Limousin et les émailliers français. Biographie critique*, Paris, 1914, p. 101; F.H. Cripps-Day, *A Record of Armour Sales, 1881-1924*, London, 1925, p. 31; J. Mann, "The Horn of St. Hubert," *The Burlington Magazine*, XCII, June 1950, p. 162; Yvonne Hackenbroch, "A Limoges Enamel Hunting Horn," *Connoisseur* (American ed.), 133, June 1954, pp. 249-51, ill.; Thomas P.F. Hoving, "'Valuables and Ornamental Items': The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alastair Bradley Martin," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXVIII, 3, November 1969, pp. 146-60, ill. p. 157.

EXHIBITED: *Special Exhibition of Works of Art of the Medieval, Renaissance, and more Recent Periods on Loan at the South Kensington Museum*, South Kensington Museum (now the Victoria and Albert Museum), London, June 1862, no. 1690; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1954; *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969-January 4, 1970, no. 130.

NOTES

1. *The Valuable Contents of Strawberry Hill*, catalogue of the sale conducted by George Robbins, April 25-May 20, 1842, London, p. ix.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 190.
3. *Gooseberry Hall, The renowned Seat of Sir Hildebrod Gooseberry, Mr. Triptolemus Scattergoods*, London, 1842, p. viii.
4. *Punch—The London Charivari*, II, 1842, p. 132.

Candlestick

This candlestick, fashioned of two completely different parts with at least a century between them, arouses a number of thoughts and questions. Its grease pan, or nozzle, is typical of Saint-Porchaire ware, an extremely rare, yellow-white earthenware, mostly unusually light in weight, that falls within the class of so-called *faïences fines*. The short-lived factory in the Department of Deux-Sèvres (the old Department of Saintonge) in the Poitou, seems to have been active in the time of François I, Diane de Poitiers, and Henri II (between about 1520 and 1560).

Unfailingly recognizable are the highly sophisticated, esoteric shapes of the products, which were decorated with a network of bold arabesque interlacing scrolls, chiefly in yellow ocher and brown, to which grotesque masks and putti were applied, using molds and stamps, while the clay was still wet.¹ The designs derive from the ornamental repertory of contemporary Italianizing niello work, and the art of the bookbinder in the manner of Jean Grolier de Servières.

When, during the reign of Louis Philippe (1834–48), the *faïence* was rediscovered and studied, it was first thought to be of Italian origin, although it was already termed “Henri Deux Ware.” In 1847, C. and H. Delange proposed that Girolamo della Robbia had been designer of the production,² and A. Tainturier, in 1860, suggested that the designers were two goldsmiths, Ascanio and Paolo, both of whom had been trained by Benvenuto Cellini.³

However, the great rarity of the ware has always been recognized. Comte Le Clément de Ris, one of the first students of the ware to suggest the possibility that the workmanship might, in fact, be French, begins his paper on “Les Fayences de Henri II” enthusiastically: “Voici le phénix et le sphinx de la curiosité. Posséder une faïence de Henri II est le souhait de tous les collectionneurs: En découvrir une nouvelle est le rêve de plusieurs.”⁴ He only knew thirty-six pieces. One year later, C. and H. Delange list and reproduce fifty-two pieces.⁵ Edmond Bonnaffé lists sixty-five pieces and convincingly establishes the factory that made the ware in Saint-Porchaire.⁶ Since then, a few more than ten objects have been so attributed; the last, an ewer from the collection of Colonel N. R. Colville, brought £4,000 at Sotheby’s, London, on June 17, 1975.

Two complete Saint-Porchaire candlesticks are extant: one is in the Collection Dutuit, Musée du Petit Palais, Paris; the other is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. These examples allow us to reconstruct the original shape of the candlestick of which the Guennol grease pan may once have been a part. Such sumptuously adorned candlesticks, like the salts or other precious Saint-Porchaire tableware, were usually manufactured in pairs. In size and decoration this grease pan seems to duplicate the one in the Victoria and Albert Museum.

Approximately one hundred years after it was made, the grease pan was mounted on a copper-gilt stem in the shape of a lion. The animal, in upright posture, proudly holds in both paws a shield charged with coats of arms depicted in a colored, waxlike paste, simulating cloisonné enamel. The lion stands on a hexagonal base decorated with embossed arabesques and cherub heads in open work. The coats of arms are those of the counts of Hohenlohe-Langenburg incorporated with those of the counts of Gleichen. The first count to have had these arms seems to have been Count Heinrich Friedrich von Hohenlohe (1625–99).⁷

The stem, at first superficial glance, recalls Netherlandish workmanship, and thus may have been ordered by Count Philipp Ernst von Hohenlohe-Langenburg (1584–1628) when he served as field marshal (*Kriegsoberst*) of the United Netherlands. However, closer stylistic analysis points to an origin in Augsburg, a leading artistic center during this period. Similar lions of gilt-bronze are mounted on known Augsburg clocks dated 1627 and 1630.⁸

In a letter to the editor of *The Connoisseur* of July 1948 the owner of the Guennol candlestick wrote: “One theory holds that a contemporary metalworker obtained the nozzle in question directly from the *fabrique*

and designed a suitable mount for it. The accepted belief that Henri II ware was made in sections supports the above opinion. The second theory is that the nozzle is all that remains of a complete candlestick, the rest of which was somehow completely destroyed. According to this view the owner of the damaged candlestick, appreciating the value of even a fragment of the ware, had a mount especially made to preserve what remained."⁹ The second theory seems more plausible.

Decorative lions carrying such utilitarian objects as candlesticks, cups, vases, or lamps have a long ancestry. From western Europe, a bronze candlestick of this type in the Landesmuseum in Kassel dates to the Romanesque period. The practice of embellishing objects of relatively humble material—chiefly pottery and glass—with precious-metal mounts—mounts of silver and gold—is also ancient. This strangely fascinating union of two widely different materials and crafts—that of the potter and the goldsmith—had a twofold purpose. One was purely practical: to secure the object and, when in a fragmentary state, to protect it from further damage, such as strengthening the fragile and delicate parts of a precious piece of pottery or glass with simple metal rings. If this remedy failed—if stem or foot were broken—more solid and more elaborate metal mounts were devised. The other purpose was motivated by the desire to enrich the object and to emphasize its value and importance by ambitious artistic adornments, especially if it were thought to be sacred, ancient, exotic, or otherwise of great rarity.

To underscore and enhance the palpable beauty of an object has always been a universal desire: the glazed faïence vessels with gold mounts from Knossos; Roman urns and *terra-sigillata* bowls in German Renaissance silver mounts; exported Turkish faïence; Sung, Ming, and later Chinese porcelains with their most elaborate and lovely Gothic and later European mounts of precious metal; silver-mounted pieces of Rhenish and English stoneware of the sixteenth century—these are but a few examples.¹⁰ In this category of mounted objects the closest analogies to the Hohenlohe candlestick are contemporary: the so-called *Schrauben-Gläser*, or cups—chiefly in *façon de Venise* style—that were screwed on or otherwise attached to a less breakable metal stem, often of grotesque and intricate design. These objects all doubtlessly evoke the taste and reflect the spirit of those with which the German princes—from the Renaissance to the seventeenth century—filled their *Kunst-kammern* and *Wunderkammern*. Yet their fortunate owners embellished only those objects that they regarded as especially worth the effort with such precious mounts.

It remains a curious fact that, except for the Hohenlohe candlestick, no other piece of Saint-Porchaire ware adorned with metal mounts seems to have survived. Even considering the accidents of survival, the combination of Saint-Porchaire and Augsburg ware might be exceptional, if not unique. As already mentioned, the study and appreciation of Saint-Porchaire ware only began in the nineteenth century. The coat of arms and the initials decorating the majority of pieces that have survived suggest that they were made exclusively for the French court—



Candlestick

for the royal family, Pierre de Laval-Montmorency the vicomte de Thouars, and others.

The count Hohenlohe who found it worthwhile to adorn this tiny grease pan—this fragile fragment of a candlestick—with such ambitious mounts and with his family's coat of arms has yet to be identified in the Hohenlohe archives and inventories. Were his motivations merely sentimental? (Family tradition held that the candlestick was a gift from a friend at the French court.) Or was he truly conscious of the rarity and artistic quality of the object? Still to be discovered in the Hohenlohe Collections are records of other objects embellished with similar mounts, as well as clues to when and how the candlestick found its way from the Schloss Hohenlohe-Langenburg in Germany to the collection of Lord Swaythling in England, from which it passed to Christie's, London, for sale at auction on July 15, 1947.

H.S.

CANDLESTICK

Faïence and copper-gilt

Height, 8 inches

France, 16th–17th centuries

EX COLL.: Hohenlohe-Langenburg, Germany; Swaythling, Townhill Park, Southampton, England; Christie's, sale, July 15, 1947, lot 356 (ill.).

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Alastair Bradley Martin, "Letter to the Editor," *Connoisseur*, CXXII, July 1948, p. 52.

NOTES

1. See Marcelle Brunet, *French Pottery and Porcelain: The Frick Collection*, VII, New York, 1974, pp. 167–80; Henri Pierre Fourest, "Faïence de St.-Porchaire," *Cahiers de la Céramique*, 45, 1965, pp. 16 ff.

2. C. and H. Delange, *Recueil de toutes les pièces connues jusqu'à nos jours de la faïence française, dite Henri II*, Paris, 1861.

3. A. Tainturier, *Notices sur les faïences du XVI^e siècle, dite Henri II*, Paris, 1860.

4. Comte Le Clément de Ris, "Les Fayences de Henri II," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, V, 1860, pp. 32–48.

5. C. and H. Delange, *Recueil de toutes les pièces connues*.

6. Edmond Bonaffé, "Les Faïences de Saint-Porchaire," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, XXXVII, 1888, pp. 313 ff.

7. The arms in the first and fourth quarters are the paternal arms of Hohenlohe; those in the second and third quarters are for Langenburg; those on the escutcheon, for Gleichen. The crest, "*deux cornes de bouffle*," is the third of the three crests borne by the family, and is for Langenburg. See *Archiv für Hohenlohische Geschichte, Ohringen*, 1856–60, pl. III, no. 1.

8. See Klaus Maurice, *Die Deutsche Räderuhr*, Munich, 1976, 2, figs. 318–23.

9. Alastair Bradley Martin, "Letter to the Editor," *Connoisseur*, CXXII, July 1948, p. 52.

10. Deliberately we omitted the antique vessels of agate, porphyry, and other semiprecious stones, and the Fatimid rock crystals with thirteenth-century silver mounts and filigree work, as well as such mounted *naturalia* as ostrich eggs or coconuts. See also Max Sauerlandt, *Edelmetallfassung in der Keramik*, Berlin, 1929.

Two Coral-and-Steel Knives

Each of these knives has a steel blade and a coral-branch handle. Both the link between blade and coral and the lower end of the blade are of damascened steel with an overall gold design of vine tendrils. Each blade is marked with an unidentified crowned R.

Although the trade in Sicilian coral came via Genoa—where many pieces were mounted for sale elsewhere—this damascene work shows no elements of the Genovese style. The damascening of iron or steel was primarily practiced by the Moors in Spain, from whom the Christian conquerors learned the technique, and was particularly suited for the decoration of arms and armor as well as for cutlery. The Spanish master sword cutlers practiced their art in many places. There is reason to believe that during the Spanish occupation of the Netherlands these sought-after masters established workshops in Antwerp and traveled just as widely as their clients. Thus, these two knives may have been

*Two
Coral-and-Steel
Knives*



made—or bought—almost anywhere between Antwerp and Dresden, from artists working in the Spanish manner, about 1560.

The knives were once part of a larger set, and were originally in the collection of the electors of Saxony in Dresden. From the same collection, there are also two rapiers, one dated 1556 and another of about 1560 (now in the Dresden Historisches Museum), decorated with similar damascening and possibly from the same workshop.

Y.H.

TWO CORAL-AND-STEEL KNIVES

Length, each, 12½ inches

The Netherlands, about 1560

EX COLL.: The Green Vaults, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Residenzschloss, Dresden (inv. no. III 174b); sold by J. Phillips, Ltd., January 3, 1969.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Yvonne Hackenbroch, "A Set of Knife, Fork, and Spoon with Coral Handles," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Journal*, 15, 1981, pp. 183–84.

Unicorn Cup

This German seventeenth-century cup, remarkable in shape and material, displays unusual restraint for an object made during the period of Baroque exuberance in southern Germany. The goldsmith who created this setting for a section of narwhal horn allowed the slender shape of the horn to determine the shape of the cup, which he then crowned with a finial figure of the mystical unicorn.

Narwhal horn, once believed to be the horn of the legendary unicorn, was eventually identified as the single tusk of a small whale inhabiting northern waters. In contrast to curved elephant tusks of far greater circumference, narwhal horn is absolutely straight and has spiral ridges along its length. Rare at all times, it became even rarer as the centuries advanced; parts of the tusk were intentionally reduced to powder and mixed with wine or food, because of a belief that narwhal horn had magical powers that were an antidote, if not a warning, against poison.

The narwhal section of the Guennol cup is carved in low relief with a unicorn's head, its horn cut to follow the natural twist of the surface. Guido Schoenberger, who published the cup in 1951, linked it to a group of five narwhal cups with varying mounts, all carved with



*Unicorn
Cup*

similar unicorn heads. The silver-gilt setting of the Guennol cup bears the Frankfort town mark beside the maker's mark: NK a star above, in a shield-shaped reserve. Schoenberger proposes the name of Niclass Kempff (1623–78), who became master in 1647.¹ Although this attribution is most suggestive, it cannot be definitely confirmed. This localization prompted Schoenberger to search for a contemporary ivory carver who was active in Frankfort at that time. He suggested the carver Justus Glesker, born in Hameln between 1610 and 1632, who had settled in Frankfort on the Main in 1648, having spent his *Wanderjahre* in Italy. Glesker became a Frankfort citizen in 1654 and died there in 1678.

In his *Academie der Bau- und Malery-Künste* of 1675 Joachim von Sandrart praises Glesker as “*sonderlich in Helfenbein*” (“remarkable in ivory”). Von Sandrart refers to seven works in ivory, listed in the workshop inventory drawn up after Glesker's death: one crucifix, one Saint Sebastian, one Ecce Homo, one Abundantia, two jugs, and one beaker. None of these has been identified to serve as the basis for further attributions, and we do not know who suggested pursuing the unicorn theme twice, once carved in narwhal horn and once cast in silver-gilt, the latter displaying the arms of the original owner. There are, however, parallels, such as the ostrich egg cups with silver-gilt finial figures in the shape of an ostrich. In this instance, no more can be said than that the Guennol cup was made in Frankfort between 1647 and 1678, most likely by the goldsmith Niclass Kempff, in cooperation with a skillful ivory carver, who might have been Justus Glesker. Goldsmith and carver combined their talents in creating a most appealing and harmonious work of art.

Y.H.

UNICORN CUP

Narwhal horn and silver-gilt

Height, 12½ inches

Frankfort on the Main, Germany, 1647–78

EX COLL.: Freiherr Max von Goldschmidt-Rothschild, Frankfort on the Main.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Guido Schoenberger, “A Goblet of Unicorn Horn,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, IX, 9, June 1951, pp. 284–88, ill. p. 285; Margaret B. Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, New York, 1976, pp. 29, 31, fig. 11; Christian Theuerkauff, “Justus Glesker oder Ehr Gott Bernhard Bendl?,” *Schriften des Historischen Museums Frankfurt am Main*, XIII, 1972, p. 67, n. 7.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 133; The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1951.

NOTE

1. For Niclass (Nicolaus) Kempff I, see also Wakter Karl Zülch, *Frankfurter Künstler 1223-1700*, Frankfort on the Main, 1935, p. 549; Wolfgang Scheffler, *Goldschmiede Hessens*, Berlin and New York, 1976, no. 226, p. 192.

Gold-mounted Agate Bowl

The Guennol agate bowl is of circular shape and rests upon a gently spreading foot. Black-and-white enameled gold mounts encircle the foot; they are linked from foot to lip by means of two hinged gold bands that support scroll handles. The particular attraction of the bowl is its graceful shape, complemented by the restrained gold setting. Not only the scroll handles with their irregular outlines, but also the aqueous surface effects of the wavy pattern in the enamel follow the auricular style with its curving outlines.

*Gold-mounted
Agate Bowl*



Auricular, or lobed, ornament—always fluid and asymmetrical—was adopted by Dutch and German goldsmiths of the early seventeenth century. In this instance, it has been slightly modified to conform to the bowl's small scale, although without any loss of vitality. The bowl quite likely originated in a Paris court workshop. The sparing use of enamel colors, so typical of French court art of the reign of Henri II, continued into the seventeenth century, particularly applied to small, precious objects of almost timeless simplicity.

Y.H.

GOLD-MOUNTED AGATE BOWL

Height, 2 inches

Paris, France, first half of the 17th century

Ex COLL.: Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore.

Gold Cup *by Ralph Leake*

The gently curved bowl of the cup, resting upon the molded rim of the foot, rises to a slightly everted lip. Two cast and foliated scroll handles extend horizontally like wings. The three engraved initials may be those of the original owner. Contrary to prevailing fashion, which often led to all-over flat-chasing with chinoiserie design, this cup, made of pure unadorned gold with only faint traces of tooling, is of appealing austerity, or perhaps extraordinary sophistication. A return to such simplicity seems a natural reaction to the Caroline preference for cups in the floral Baroque style with embossed decoration.

Ralph Leake, a resident of London, became a master goldsmith in 1671. During 1682, he made the Guennol cup as well as a smaller cup in silver gilt, almost identical in shape.¹

Y.H.

GOLD CUP by Ralph Leake

Height, 2½ inches

England, 1682

NOTE

1. For the smaller cup, see Michael Clayton, *The Collector's Dictionary of Silver and Gold of Great Britain and North America*, Norwich, 1971, p. 302, fig. 627b.



Gold Cup

*Badge of the Danish
Order of the Elephant*

Throughout history, a variety of evocative national symbols have come to represent, for the citizen, the visual embodiment of the political and patriotic powers and traditions of his country. The Danes have long regarded the Order of the Elephant as the symbol of much of the best in their country's history, past and present.

The recognition of outstanding achievement with a unique symbol that distinguishes one man from another is not readily understood in the United States, where economic compensation is often regarded as the only suitable reward. In Denmark, admission to the select fraternity whose badge is the jeweled and enameled elephant is the highest honor the sovereign can confer on the well-deserving.

*Badge of
the Danish
Order of the
Elephant*



The Order of the Elephant is Denmark's oldest. The antiquity of the institution and the great rarity of its bestowal have enhanced the unusually high prestige with which it is regarded in the world today. No other similar distinction in active use in any country is more sparingly given. Recent recipients were not only Danish notables, but men of world stature as well, among them Niels Bohr, the Nobel Prize-winning Danish physicist (1947); Winston Churchill (1950), Dwight D. Eisenhower (1945); Bernard Montgomery, the British field marshal (1945); and Charles de Gaulle (1965).

Although its beginnings can be traced to the middle of the fifteenth century, the Order was given its modern form by King Christian V in 1693, when new statutes were drawn up. The number of living knights at any one time originally was limited to thirty, apart from the royal family and foreign chiefs of state. While the membership has varied over the years, the total during this century has been very low. In 1958, King Frederick IX decided that women should have an equal right to receive the honor.

The insignia is bestowed in three separate elements. The most important is the badge, a white-enameled gold elephant with a watch-

tower on its back and a turbaned mahout, holding a spear, seated on its neck. It is suspended from a light blue watered-silk ribbon four inches in width, worn as a sash over the left shoulder—resting on the right hip. A silver star worn on the left breast is formed of eight groups of smooth rays with a center medallion bearing a Latin cross set in red enamel and surrounded by a laurel wreath in silver resting on a gold ground. On formal occasions at the Danish court—the day of the Order (January 1), or at festivals such as the reigning monarch's birthday, or June 28, the birthday of Waldemar II, "the Victorious")—the badge is suspended from a "collar," or chain, of twenty-one golden elephants, each with a light blue-enameled carpet on its back bearing a gold D for *Dacia*, medieval Latin for Denmark. These elephants alternate with twenty-one castellated towers, fastened to each other by short gold chains. The collar rests on the shoulders in such a manner that the catenary is equal at front and back.

The Guennol badge is in the form of a white-enameled copper-gilt elephant, with a light blue-enameled carpet and harness on its back. Set atop the carpet is a round castellated brick tower of shaded pink-and-white enamel, edged above and below with small table-cut stones, surmounted by an enameled coronet ornament and a swivel loop for suspension. A mahout holding a spear sits on the elephant's neck. A cross of five table-cut stones is set into the animal's flank over the draped carpet. The eyes are small stones, and a foiled rose-cut diamond is set in the animal's forehead. The reverse of the carpet covering the elephant's flank bears the crowned cipher of Frederick IV (1699–1730), king of Denmark. With the exception of the jeweled cross, the other details are the same as those on the obverse. The enamel shows signs of discreet repair. Since the badges of the two Danish orders always carry the cipher of the reigning sovereign at the time of issue, the cipher of King Frederick IV, as well as the details of workmanship, indicates that the Guennol badge probably dates from the early eighteenth century. The badge is of the variety normally worn by members of the Order in the era when the insignia of orders of knighthood were used more frequently than now on informal occasions.

H.G.

BADGE OF THE DANISH ORDER OF THE ELEPHANT

Enamel, copper-gilt, and diamonds

Height, 2½ inches; length, 3⅓ inches

Denmark, 1699–1730

Winged Angel's Head *by Franz Ignaz Günther*

As far as sculpture is concerned the most superb craftsman of the Rococo period—an era known for fine achievement in decorative arts—was Franz Ignaz Günther (1725–75) of Munich.

Many of Günther's works, including the Guennol winged angel's head, were originally created to embellish church interiors. Two sculptures of 1758–59 by Günther, related both in concept and style to the angel, are to be found on the high altar of the parish church of St. Maria in München-Thalkirchen, and there are others of his works from 1759 on two side altars in the chapel of St. Anastasia in Benediktbeuern. The Guennol winged angel's head belongs incontrovertibly to the artist's early period. Further examples of Günther's sensitive religious wood carvings can be seen in the United States in The Cleveland Museum of Art and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

The distinguishing feature of Günther's style is his ability to portray artistically the spiritual and the earthly quality—the so-called profane aspect—of his subjects. The spirituality of his work places Günther alongside Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, the greatest musical talent of the Rococo age. Today both appeal to us as the quintessence of the style of the epoch.

It would be misguided to compare Ignaz Günther, whose forebears came of ancient south Tyrolean yeoman stock, to such leading European old masters of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as Michelangelo, Rubens, or Bernini—who, by virtue of their own personal styles, exerted a profound and lasting influence on the development of painting and sculpture in the West.

Günther had no followers, even late in the eighteenth century. He had been sensitive to the genius of François de Cuvilliés (1695–1768), the Flemish Rococo architect to the elector of Bavaria, with whom he shared a great affinity, as well as with the Flemish seventeenth-century sculptor François Duquesnoy (1594–1643). Duquesnoy had been given the cognomen “Il fattore di putti,” a designation that could equally well have been applied to Günther in the eighteenth century.

The winged angel's head, carved in limewood, is well preserved and still attached to its original mounting. Not only is it a classic example of Günther's work, but it is also representative of the very best in Bavarian Rococo sculpture.

G.P.W.



WINGED ANGEL'S HEAD
by Franz Ignaz Günther

Painted limewood
Height, 11 inches
Southern Bavaria, about 1760

*Winged
Angel's Head*

Elephant by Fabergé

The work of Peter Carl Fabergé (1846–1920), artist-jeweler and goldsmith to the imperial court of Russia, is undoubtedly the last true expression of court art within the European tradition. His bejeweled eggs with glorious “surprises” inside are world renowned, and his unique “objects of fantasy”—as he termed them—have delighted collector and public alike for many decades.

The roots of Fabergé’s art are farther west, in France, from which his ancestors had fled in 1685 during the persecution of the Huguenots. By 1842 Gustav, Carl’s father, had settled in St. Petersburg, where he opened a jewelry shop; Carl took control of the family enterprise in 1870, at the age of only twenty-four. Soon he was concentrating on his ingenious fantastical creations.

Carl Fabergé’s exquisite combination of the jeweler’s and goldsmith’s arts resulted in lovely, fragile, and luxurious objects. He created the first of his famous imperial Easter eggs to assuage the grief of Russia’s dowager empress Maria Feodorovna over the assassination of her father-in-law, Czar Alexander II, in 1881. Fabergé created fifty-eight delightful imperial eggs, forty-five of which still exist today.

Fabergé’s workshops also turned out other wonders envisioned by this many-sided genius, for whom no object was too great a challenge. He found much of his inspiration in nature, and his delightful depictions of flora and fauna are marked by imagination, taste, and perfection. Small wonder that the presentation of a gift from the Fabergé workshops became fashionable not only in Russia, but also in Asia, America, and especially in Edwardian England.

Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII and sister of Empress Maria Feodorovna, collected a royal menagerie of tiny Fabergé animals, including elephants. (The collection is now at Sandringham House, Norfolk.)

At one time the jeweler maintained a staff of five hundred and shops in St. Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, Kiev, and London, until the Russian Revolution brought Fabergé’s world and much of the courtly elegance of which he was so important a part to an abrupt end in 1917.

The Guennol elephant, most unusual for its diminutive size, was designed to represent the Order of the Elephant, the oldest order of the royal family of Denmark. Maria Feodorovna, Danish princess Dagmar before her marriage, was a member of the Order of the Elephant from birth, as was her sister, Queen Alexandra of England. According to family tradition, this particular elephant was a gift from Empress Maria Feodorovna to Princess Victoria Alberta on the occasion of her marriage to Prince Louis Alexander of Battenberg, the first marquess of Milford Haven, in 1884. It was natural for her to turn to Fabergé for the gift; the imperial family called on him for gifts to celebrate all family affairs



*Elephant
by Fabergé*

—christenings, anniversaries, birthdays, and betrothals. The number 5450 on the Guennol elephant is an early one in the history of the Fabergé firm and is thus consistent with the nuptial year 1884.

The Guennol elephant is carved of banded pale brown and gray agate, mounted in gold, the eyes set with rose-cut diamonds. The turret on top of the elephant's back, enameled in white and set with a band of diamonds below the crenellation, rests upon scarlet-enamelled trappings. The elephant is complete with its original case.

This extraordinary elephant has a fascinating history with Europe's closely related royal families in the late nineteenth century. Princess Victoria Alberta, recipient of the splendid gift, was the daughter of Grand Duke Louis IV of Hesse-Darmstadt and Princess Alice Maud Mary, one of the nine children of Queen Victoria and Prince Consort Albert. Victoria Alberta was also the sister of Princess Alix, who was to become Alexandra Feodorovna, wife of Nicholas II, the last czar. Upon the death of Victoria Alberta in 1950, the elephant passed to her daughter, Princess Alice, also a member of the Order, who in 1903, had married still another knight of the Order, Prince Andrew of Greece and Denmark. (Andrew's father, King George I of the Hellenes, was a brother of Maria Feodorovna and Queen Alexandra.)

Princess Alice and Prince Andrew were the parents of Prince Philip, duke of Edinburgh and husband of Queen Elizabeth II. Prin-

cess Alice was, therefore, a niece by marriage to both Queen Alexandra Feodorovna of Russia and the great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria. The elephant was purchased, through an intermediary, from a descendant of Princess Alice after her death in 1969.

J.W.

ELEPHANT BY FABERGÉ

Agate, gold, and diamonds

Height, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch; length, $\frac{7}{8}$ inch; width, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

Russia, about 1884

EX COLL.: Empress Maria Feodorovna, Russia; Princess Victoria Alberta, Russia; Princess Alice (d. 1969); Christie's, Geneva, Sale of Fine Gold Boxes and Objets d'Art by Fabergé, November 19, 1970, lot 142.

Asian Art

AMY G. POSTER

WITH

R.H. ELLSWORTH

ROBERT MOES

RICHARD E. VINOGRAD

Asian Art

Volume two of *The Guennol Collection* illustrates the many ways in which the collection has grown since the first volume appeared in 1975. The collection of Asian art has continued to develop; keeping within the same guidelines of overall quality, it has nevertheless increased in depth and variety. Works from various Asian cultures and periods are represented here by only about twenty pieces, but twenty that can be said to demonstrate the height of artistic achievement.

The thread that unites these works of art is the personal aesthetic of the collectors. Significantly, in eras long past, a number of pieces now in the Guennol Collection have passed through the hands of collectors whose own art collections were justly renowned. Emperor Jahangir (1569–1627) of the Mughal empire in India was one such great connoisseur and collector. Many of the masterpieces produced for him during his reign are documented objects, such as the Guennol jade wine cup decorated with bands of calligraphy and inscribed with Jahangir's honorific titles. The passion of Emperor Ch'ien-lung (1711–99) for collecting objects of beauty from China's ancient past is here represented by several pieces, notably the magnificent jade *kuei*, or "scepter," which is inscribed with one of his imperial titles. While the mere presence of an object in the collection of a famous and storied collector of the past lends importance to an object, surely the selection of these objects by distinguished connoisseurs of both past and present suggests a continuing tradition of vision and taste.

The Guennol Collection is rich in carved hard-stone objects, and particularly in jade—which was a favorite medium of artists and artisans of the Orient. They were fascinated by the mystique of jade and by its innate natural beauty. Such materials were rare and desirable then as now, and the carving of hard stones always required masterful technical accomplishment. The Chinese and Mughal jades included here vividly illustrate the beauty of

the material, the carving techniques, and the variety of traditional forms in which the medium could be fashioned.

Ceremonial jade batons and scepters of the Neolithic, Shang, and Chou periods derive from a type of earlier stone weapon or tool, which by the second millennium B.C. had become a purely ritual object. Three examples of early Chinese jade in the collection are of special interest. The largest and most impressive archaic piece is a richly variegated jade ax, selected for its remarkable colors and strength of form. Its coloration is strikingly similar to the Ch'ien-lung *kuei*, which may indicate that they were originally from the same region. These two objects and a third—a ritual blade—have in common a purity of form characteristic of the early jades, which often were finished without further embellishment.

The small Shang dynasty jade bear represents another category of that aesthetic. The bear has a powerful visual impact and, in spite of its size—it is less than two inches high—suggests the awesome strength of a figure of monumental proportions. It stands out among the masterpieces in the Guennol Collection as one of the finest archaic Chinese jades now in the West.

Simple form is also an achievement of later Chinese art, as exemplified by the more functional objects in the collection. The Chun-yao dish, the chicken-blood-stone brush rest and seal stones, the *huang-hua-li* (yellow rosewood) brush pot, and the fantastic rock are representative of those objects that often were associated with the scholar's writing table. The scholar selected objects for his table to symbolize antiquity and to inspire him with a reverence for nature, which was symbolic of China's perpetual tradition. The Guennol brush rest, for example, was created in the form of a mountain with a symbolic number of peaks—three or five—as in the Po-shan ("Hills of Heaven"), the mountainous district in northeastern China.

The selection of Japanese and Indian objects in the Guennol Collection was made with the same eye for their inherent natural beauty, finesse in detail work, and simplicity of form. The Guennol carved *magatama* ("hook bead") is unquestionably the finest example outside of Japan. Its unusually large scale and its style of carving, when combined with its shape and flanged detail, result in a most striking and expressive form.

The two Japanese ceramics included in the collection are characteristic of the pottery made specifically for the tea ceremony. The covered food container (*futamono*) by the master Ogata Kenzan shows the typical bold surface design, applied with enamels under the glaze, for which Kenzan was noted. The Raku ware tea bowl by Dōnyū, the third-generation Raku tea master, displays a more direct and unpretentious style, resulting entirely from the simple potting, glazing, and firing processes, which were considered mandatory for tea ceremony wares.

In contrast to the ceramics in the collection, the various small personal items, such as the two netsuke, represent a completely different aspect of Japanese taste. The simplified and abstract forms each exemplify the style of their master netsuke carvers: the small, flat, and humorous swallow is by

the master Masanao (active mid-eighteenth century), and the more intricate inlaid wood carving is of the less well known Iwami School.

The Indian copper anthropomorph is one of the most enigmatic pieces in the collection. It is noteworthy not only for its archaeological interest, but also for its remarkable silhouette, and is the one of a few such forms known outside of India that compares with the documented examples discovered with the Copper Hoards of the Gangetic Plains, which are regarded as the earliest remains in India.

The single Indian sculpture in the collection is a section of a limestone relief from the vicinity of Amaravati in southeastern India, a center of Buddhist culture until the fourth century A.D. Intended as the facing of a *stupa*, a reliquary mound, this sculptural fragment represents part of a scene from Buddha's life involving the conversion of Muchalinda, the Spirit of the Waters. The gestures of the figures, their physiognomy, and their jeweled turbans are characteristic of the regional art from the period.

The taste of the collectors, however, favors Mughal works from India, and Mughal jades in particular. Traditional Indian skill in hard-stone carving evolved from earliest times when trade links were established with the Romans. Various influences, ranging from Timurid and Indo-Persian to Chinese, are evident in the four Guennol jades included in this volume. Each expresses an aspect of the classical Mughal taste, here epitomized in the Jahangir wine cup—one of the earliest documented Mughal jade objects and a tour de force of incised calligraphic decoration.

Many of the Guennol pieces can take their place among the rare and documented objects that form the backbone of our understanding of Asian art, but it is nevertheless the vitality of form and expression that stands out in every piece, demanding our attention as scholar or connoisseur. Such mastery compels an appreciation of these expressions of Asian culture and an admiration for the discerning sensibility of the collectors.

A.G.P.

Copper Anthropomorphic Image

One of the most dynamic yet enigmatic objects in the Guennol Collection to have come to light is a flat piece of copper in the shape of a human being, which has thus far been identified as an Indian Copper Age representation of a male figure. Dating from 1500 to 1000 B.C., it is no doubt related to the anthropomorphic forms found with the Copper Hoards at Indian archaeological sites, primarily in the Gangetic Basin, Orissa, and Madhya Pradesh.¹ We are fairly sure that the origin of the Copper Hoard objects was indigenous to the sites where they were found.²

Such distinctive anthropomorphic forms have not been unearthed outside of India, even though other artifacts of copper or clay excavated with such pieces do seem related to implements and objects that belonged to contemporary cultures of the Indus Valley region and western Asia. According to present data, these Copper Hoard anthropomorphic forms are pure copper, or copper and arsenic—not alloys made from copper and tin or lead, as are those from the Indus Valley or sites outside of India.³ The rich copper ores from Bihar in eastern India were the likely source of these early metals.

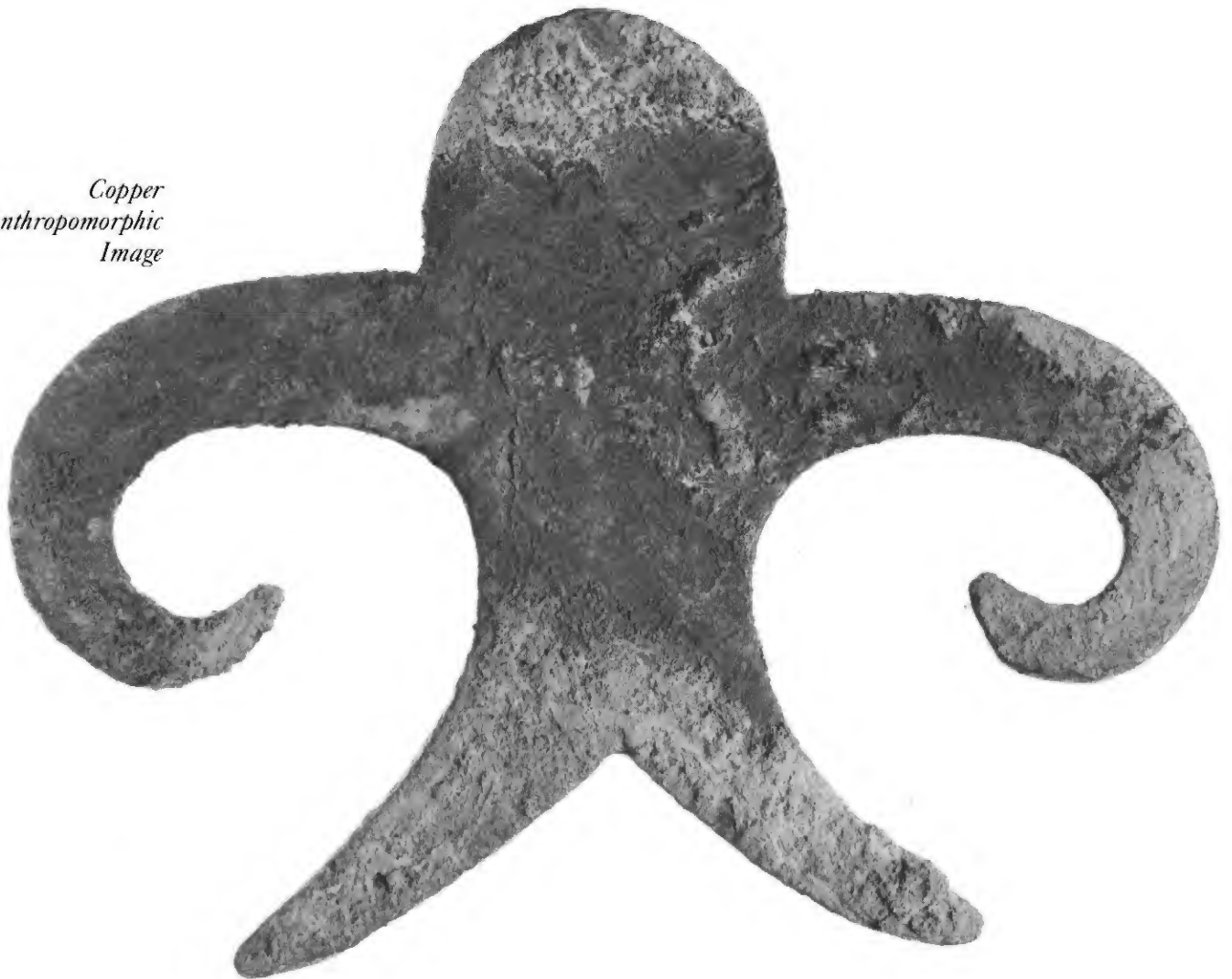
These objects have in common their shape: a flat abstract form, with a semicircular protuberance at one end representing the “head,” two outstretched “arms” with “forearms” curving inward, and two outspread “legs.” Because their silhouettes resemble frontal human forms, the cast objects have been called *anthropomorphs*. They vary in proportion—some are elongated, others squat—and can be as wide as sixteen to nineteen inches. Their depth is also regular (approximately one-eighth inch) except for an extra thickness about the “head” in some examples,⁴ but their weights have not yet been compared. Often, their surfaces have an overall hammered ornamentation.⁵ The approximately fifteen such forms known were discovered at a number of sites throughout central India. One copper anthropomorph from Bisauli in Uttar Pradesh (now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan at Banaras Hindu University) is closely related to the Guennol form in shape and size.⁶ The Guennol anthropomorphic image is neither elongated nor squat, but is an aesthetically pleasing regular form, distinguished by an intense malachite green patination. Since the piece has not been cleaned, no traces of the typical hammered surface design have been revealed beneath the patination.

The shapes and weathering of such contemporary finds as cast-copper harpoons, celts, hooks, swords, and spearheads indicate that they were used as weapons or tools. Robert Heine-Geldern and Stuart Piggott, the archaeologists who first studied the hoards, related these objects—we now believe, erroneously—to the southward migrations to

central India of the Vedic Aryans and members of the Harappan culture of the Indus Valley region.⁷ Yet none of the anthropomorphic forms has been discovered in areas west of central India. If the archaeologists' hypotheses regarding the origins of the people who used these implements had been correct, it would have followed that the anthropomorphic forms found with these copper implements and weapons were used in Vedic ritual; some scholars have even been tempted to connect such anthropomorphic forms to the most holy Vedic ritual, the fire sacrifice. Stella Kramrisch has drawn attention to the "effigy of the 'golden man' (Hiranyapursha) embedded in the Vedic sacrificial altar (Taittiriya Sanhita V.2.7.1)."⁸ So far, however, none of the copper anthropomorphic objects has been discovered with the remains of a fire altar, and the pure copper content of such figures suggests that these objects were indigenous to the areas in which they were found—as noted earlier—and did not figure in the Aryan Vedic culture.⁹

Another possible ritualistic use of these forms as religious symbols has been proposed by P.K. Agravala, who sees the anthropomorphs as

*Copper
Anthropomorphic
Image*



prototypes of the *sri-vatsa* symbol, a mark on the chest of the Hindu God Vishnu, which represents a lock of hair of his consort, Laksmi.¹⁰ As such, Agravala theorizes that the copper symbol may have been associated with the primordial goddess (or Mother Goddess). Tapan Kumar Das Gupta suggests that the symbol is the precursor of the *vajra*, a ritual thunderbolt.¹¹

Aside from their possible use as ritualistic objects, other theories about the functions and origins of these forms are based solely on their shape. D.P. Agrawal believes that they were used as projectiles and were thrown at a bird or other prey, somewhat like boomerangs.¹² He prefers this purely functional approach and considers the aerodynamics of their shape in light of archaeological evidence surrounding other Copper Hoard finds.

The silhouettes of the Guennol piece and the related group of copper anthropomorphs recall clay objects of the early Copper Age (about 3000–1500 B.C.) and certain hand-modeled figures associated with fertility, which have been discovered throughout northern India. The latter also predate the Mauryan period (322–185 B.C.), and have been discovered among numerous chance finds at documented sites.¹³ These early nude Mother Goddess figures with arms akimbo, though three-dimensional and of terra-cotta, are nevertheless remarkably similar in silhouette to the copper anthropomorphs.

The dynamic abstract forms of these anthropomorphs can be appreciated independently of Indian bronze sculpture. The Guennol anthropomorph, with its strong, exciting shape and color, is on a par with the other examples known and documented in India. Although these copper objects have been discovered with pottery and tools, we can only guess at their origins and use. We are also limited by the absence of any historical sources. It is hoped that future controlled excavations will lead to a better understanding of the original functions of these anthropomorphs.

A.G.P.

COPPER ANTHROPOMORPHIC IMAGE

Height, 9½ inches; maximum width, 11¼ inches

North India, about 1500–1000 B.C.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *The Guennol Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alastair B. Martin*, New York, 1969, p. 12, no. 109.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 109; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1970.

NOTES

1. Dating derives from tests at an excavation at Lothal. See B.B. Lal, "The Copper Hoard Culture of the Ganga Valley," *Antiquity*, XLVI, 184, 1972, p. 286; George F. Dales, "The Decline of the Harappans," *Scientific American*, 214, 5, May 1966, p. 93. See also B.B. Lal, "Further Copper Hoards from the Gangetic Basin and

a Review of the Problem," *Ancient India*, 7, January 1951, pp. 20–39 (which lists thirty-four sites). Four additional sites are noted in P.K. Agravala, *Early Indian Bronzes*, Varanasi, India, 1977, p. 35.

2. M.K. Dhavalikar, *Masterpieces of Indian Terracottas*, Bombay, 1977, pp. 194–96.

3. D.P. Agrawal, *The Copper Bronze Age in India*, New Delhi, 1971, p. 171.

4. Ibid., p. 200. One of the Bharat Kala Bhavan examples illustrated by Stella Kramrisch (*The Art of India through the Ages*, 3rd ed., London and New York, 1954, pl. 3) shows a distinct ridge around the circumference of the "head."

5. Although Agrawal (*The Copper Bronze Age*, p. 200) originally suggested that these figures were cut from metal plates, more advanced technical analysis has shown that the figures were cast in closed molds. See D.P. Agrawal, R.V. Krishnamurthy, and Sheela Kusumger, "New Data on the Copper Hoards and the Daimabad Bronzes," *Man and Environment*, II, 1978, pp. 41, 43.

6. The Bharat Kala Bhavan specimen from Bisauli is illustrated in Kramrisch, *The Art of India*, p. 198, pl. 3; and in Herbert Härtel and Jeannine Auboyer, *Indien und Sudostasien Propyläen Kunstgeschichte*, XVI, Berlin, 1971, pl. 11.

7. For a discussion of these early analyses, see Stuart Piggott, "Prehistoric Copper Hoards in the Gangetic Basin," *Antiquity*, XVIII, 72, 1944, pp. 173–82, and Robert Heine-Geldern, "Archaeological Traces of the Vedic Aryans," *Journal of the Indian Society of Oriental Art*, IV, 1936, pp. 87–113.

8. Kramrisch, *The Art of India*, p. 198.

9. Lal, "Further Copper Hoards," pp. 31 ff.

10. See P.K. Agravala, *Early Indian Bronzes*, p. 37; and P.K. Agravala, *Srivatsa, The Babe of Goddess Sri*, Varanasi, India, 1974, pp. 20–22.

11. Tapan Kumar Das Gupta, *Der Vajra eine vedische Woffe*, Weisbaden, 1975.

12. Agrawal, *The Copper Bronze Age*, p. 200.

13. Although the most common form of terra-cotta Mother Goddess is one portraying a standing female with prominent breasts, narrow waist, and legs placed together, there exist hand-modeled plaques that show female figures with birdlike heads, short, stubby outstretched arms, and outspread legs. See Dhavalikar, *Masterpieces of Indian Terracottas*, pl. 14, which illustrates a female figurine dating from about the third century B.C. from Rajghat, near Varanasi.

The Nagaraja and His Queen

The early Buddhist centers in southern India flourished in the Guntur district of the eastern Deccan (modern-day Andhra Pradesh) from as early as the second century B.C. until the fourth century A.D. They are important not only for their role in disseminating Buddhism to southern and southeastern Asia, but also for their extensive participation in the sea trade from as far west as Rome and for the complexes of monuments—primarily religious—erected by their rulers. The early phase of artistic activity is represented by the Great Stupa, a Buddhist

relic mound at Amaravati built under the patronage of the Satavahana rulers, and by later sites in the vicinity such as Nagarjunakonda, which were patronized by the Ikshvakus from the second century A.D. All are considered to be among the greatest art centers of ancient India.

Nagarjunakonda, the “hill of Nagarjuna”—named after a great second-century Buddhist philosopher who was responsible for much of the renovation of Amaravati in his time—was discovered in 1926. Unfortunately, the excavated stupas, monasteries, and chapels are now inaccessible as the result of the recent construction of the Nagarjunasagar Dam and irrigation reservoir, but most of the remains of the antiquities have been moved to the Archaeological Museum, Nagarjunakonda.

The main artistic activity at the site grew through the patronage of the Ikshvaku rulers, who succeeded the Satavahanas at the end of the second century and ruled until early in the fourth century A.D. Hindu and Buddhist monuments coexisted at the site. Inscriptions of Ikshvaku kings have been discovered, but the Buddhist monasteries there were largely the interest of the Ikshvaku queens and princesses whose pious gifts are recorded in the extant donors’ inscriptions; the kings of the dynasty were known to have been worshipers of the Brahmanical gods and followers of Vedic ritual.

The stone sculptures of Nagarjunakonda, like those of the rest of the Amaravati region, are of a greenish limestone soft enough to have allowed for subtle carving and precise modeling. Most of the sculptures were reliefs designed to adhere to the brickwork of the monasteries. Freestanding sculpture of the period, from the surrounding vicinity, is known, including several exquisite late third-century standing Buddhas discovered at Nagarjunakonda.¹ Bronze images of Buddha are also known. Stylistically, these carvings continued the earlier tradition of illustrated scenes of Buddha’s life found at Bharhut and Sanchi, but the artists advanced to create complex yet unified compositions, densely crowded with figures representing various episodes and miracles (*jatakas*) from Buddha’s life.

In the Guennol architectural fragment from Nagarjunakonda, the Nagaraja and his queen are represented anthropomorphically in three-quarter profile. Only their multiple cobra hoods symbolize their serpent nature.² Such figures of Nagarajas (or “serpent kings”) as devotees of Buddha or portents of his future Buddhahood frequently occur in early Buddhist narrative sculpture. One event in the Buddha’s life concerning the Nagarajas is not often represented in early Indian carving, except at Amaravati and other local sites; it is especially common at Nagarjunakonda, where *jatakas* involving the subjugation and conversion of the fearsome serpent kings seemed to be preferred themes. This particular episode, called the miracle of the Buddha Muchalinda, takes place after the Buddha’s Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree at Gaya. During a terrible storm lasting seven days and nights, the Buddha is offered protection by the serpent king Muchalinda, whose serpent hoods shield the Buddha like an umbrella. In other reliefs depicting this miracle, the serpent kings and their queens flank a Buddha image seated in yogic meditation, and, as in the Guennol



*The Nagaraja
and His Queen*

sculpture, their hands are raised respectfully, in a gesture of adoration.

Such themes were also depicted frequently in southeast Asia, where similar compositions may be found among the Buddhist Dvaravati sculptures of Thailand, the pre-Angkor reliefs of Cambodia, and the early Buddhist sculpture of Sri Lanka, all from areas known to have had commercial contacts and religious affiliations with the eastern Deccan.³ These subjects are likewise seen at Dong-duong in Champa and at sites in the Celebes.

The Buddha Muchalinda theme is illustrated and discussed by Albert Henry Longhurst in his report of the excavated finds at Nagarjunakonda.⁴ The relief Longhurst has illustrated is well preserved and complete and shows the Naga devotees to the right and left of a central Buddha image, who is seated on the coils of the serpent and beneath the multicephalous hood. As in the Guennol relief, there are the typical decorative elements found in Nagarjunakonda sculpture: namely, crosshatched and outlined details, especially apparent in the prominent eyelids, as well as beaded repetitive floriated bands separating one incident from the next. The Nagarjunakonda panels display a rhythmic definition of forms, compared to the cursory treatment in other contemporary reliefs from the outlying region of Amaravati.

In the uppermost bands of both the Guennol and Longhurst illustrated reliefs are the Brahmi characters of a donor's inscription. More than eighteen donor inscriptions are known from the site. Generally, the inscriptions have been found along the lower parts of the stone pillars that supported the railings and balustrades around the stupas. As mentioned, the principal patrons were the Ikshvaku rulers' queens, to one of whom this fragmentary inscription may be attributed: "///yam sanghadasiya bodhiya***///" Although this phrase is undoubtedly incomplete, certain details of its meaning may be construed. Herbert Härtel suggests that it is "an inscription of a donation by the Sanghadasi Bodhi"—that is, the maidservant Bodhi... of the Sangha ("community").⁵ A female worshiper named Bodhisiri, patron of a Naharallabodu temple and monastery—one of which is located at Nagarjunakonda—is mentioned in various inscriptions.⁶ If the female called Bodhi..., described in the inscription on the Guennol relief, were, indeed, the same person, it would place the origin and date of the Guennol panel precisely in the third century A.D., in the reign of the Ikshvaku king Virapurushadatta, and on a specific site at Nagarjunakonda.⁷ However, as yet, there is insufficient evidence to connect the two personages.

Amaravati-style reliefs are found primarily in the collections of the Government Museum in Madras and in The British Museum, but, although a number of other examples are dispersed throughout western collections, the Guennol relief is the only inscribed Nagarjunakonda relief in the West. (Amaravati-style reliefs are also in the collections of The University of Michigan Museum of Art, Ann Arbor; Asian Art Museum of San Francisco;⁸ The Brooklyn Museum;⁹ Cincinnati Art Museum;¹⁰ Cleveland Museum of Art;¹¹ Detroit Institute of Arts; Los Angeles County Museum of Art;¹² The Metropolitan Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston;¹³ Musée Guimet, Paris; Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin; and in private collections here and abroad.¹⁴ A careful comparison of these few panels, however, reveals that the hand of a master is evident in the Guennol architectural fragment.

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THE NAGARAJA AND HIS QUEEN

Limestone

Height, 7½ inches; width, 12¼ inches

Nagarjunakonda, Andhra Pradesh, South India, about 3rd–4th centuries A.D.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1973.

NOTES

1. See Elizabeth S. Rosen, "Buddhist Architecture and Lay Patronage at Nagarjunakonda," *The Stupa: Its Religious, Historical and Architectural Significance*, ed. A.L. Dallapiccola, Heidelberg, 1980, pl. vii/4; Benjamin Rowland, *The Art and Architecture of India*, repr. ed., Auckland, New Zealand, 1970, fig. 145.

2. We are grateful to Rosen for sharing her research on Nagarjunakonda, the subject of her forthcoming Ph.D. thesis.

3. See Albert Longhurst, *The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunakonda, Madras Presidency*, Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India, 54, Delhi, 1938, p. 5; Douglas Barrett, "The Later School of Amaravati Sculpture," *Art and Letters*, XXVIII, 2, 1951, pp. 45–46 ff.
4. Longhurst, *Buddhist Antiquities*, p. xxiii b.
5. Our appreciation is due to Herbert Härtel, director of the Museum für Indische Kunst, Berlin, who very kindly read and translated the inscription on the Guennol relief.
6. Longhurst, *Buddhist Antiquities*, pp. 5, 7.
7. Rosen, "Buddhist Architecture and Lay Patronage," p. 119.
8. *Archives of Asian Art*, XXXII, 1979, fig. 53.
9. See the seated buddha (*The Art of India: Stone Sculpture*, introduction by Aschwin Lippe, The Asia Society, New York, 1962, no. 26, acc. no. L59.15.2); and the relief fragment (acc. no. L68.13.17), lent by The Arthur M. Sackler Collection.
10. *Sculpture Collection of the Cincinnati Art Museum*, Cincinnati, 1970, p. 97, acc. no. 152.187.
11. Alice Heeramanek, *Masterpieces of Indian Sculpture from the Former Collections of Nasli M. Heeramanek*, Verona, 1979, pls. 7, 8.
12. Pratapaditya Pal, "South Indian Sculptures in the Museum," *Los Angeles County Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXII, 1976, pp. 30–57, figs. 1–5.
13. Jan Fontein and Pratapaditya Pal, *Museum of Fine Arts, Boston: Oriental Art*, Greenwich, Conn., 1969, fig. 119.
14. Many of the Amaravati-style sculptures in these museums were exhibited by C.T. Loo, *The Sculpture of Greater India*, New York, 1942.

Nephrite Wine Cup

Although Indian jade carvings, particularly Mughal jades, are widely known, only recently has it been convincingly demonstrated that many are of Indian, rather than Chinese, manufacture.¹ The Guennol jade wine cup may recall a shape once popular in China, but its decoration, technique, and especially its inscriptions all indicate that it originated in India during the reign of Jahangir (1605–1627), when a style of carving based on Timurid prototypes prevailed.

At the age of thirty-six, Jahangir ascended the Mughal throne and proclaimed himself "Nurud-din Jahangir Padshah" or "World Seizer." His memoirs, the *Tuzuk-i Jahangiri*, reveal that while he continued to carry on court proceedings and other regal duties—as did his father, Emperor Akbar—he devoted his life largely to artistic pursuits, as a general patron of the arts; in many areas he was unequaled as a connoisseur. Masters of writing, painting, illumination, and other crafts worked in his court studios, while traveling envoys collected unique objects for him from other regions.

Many outstanding artists are mentioned in his memoirs, but no jade craftsman is noted. We are fortunate that a profusion of available objects affords a sense of his aesthetic interests. Captain William Hawkins, ambassador of James I of England to the Mughal court, wrote in 1609 of actually viewing Jahangir's jades, alluding to five hundred wine cups, but Stuart Cary Welch has contended that "reliably inscribed pieces are almost non-existent."² At least twelve documented jade objects, however, can be cited as having belonged to—or been commissioned by—Jahangir.³

There are no direct references to the presentation or commission of the Guennol jade cup in Jahangir's memoirs but there are many references to gifts of precious objects that he gave or received. A dedicatory inscription on the cup of 1016 (A.D. 1607/8) corresponds to the second year of Jahangir's reign, when he led an expedition into the provinces, to Lahore and Kashmir, regions known not only for beautiful flowers, trees, fruits, and plants, but also for celebrated sites of extraordinary beauty, many of which Jahangir described in his memoirs. He commissioned poetic verses to commemorate impressive events or sights, and ordered drinking parties whenever he was so moved. Such an event may have inspired the poetic verses inscribed on this cup.

The Guennol cup has rounded sides, a low foot, and a slightly flared rim, similar to the popular Chinese porcelain drinking cups that appeared during the Sung dynasty (eleventh to thirteenth centuries), but are ultimately derived from Persian prototypes. The cup is carved of a dark green nephrite, which is mottled in color where the stone has calcified. The exterior is a tour de force, decorated with precisely incised inscriptions of Jahangir's titles and Persian verses set in three bands, separated by rows of repeated Xs.

Robert Skelton has studied the inscriptions on the Guennol cup, and offers the following translation, beginning from the upper rim, where the first quatrain reads:

See, this cup's body imbued with spirit—
A jasmine leaf suffused with purple
[literally, "of the judas tree"]
No, I err! Through extreme graciousness
It is watery [i.e., "yields water"], pregnant with flowing fire [wine].⁴

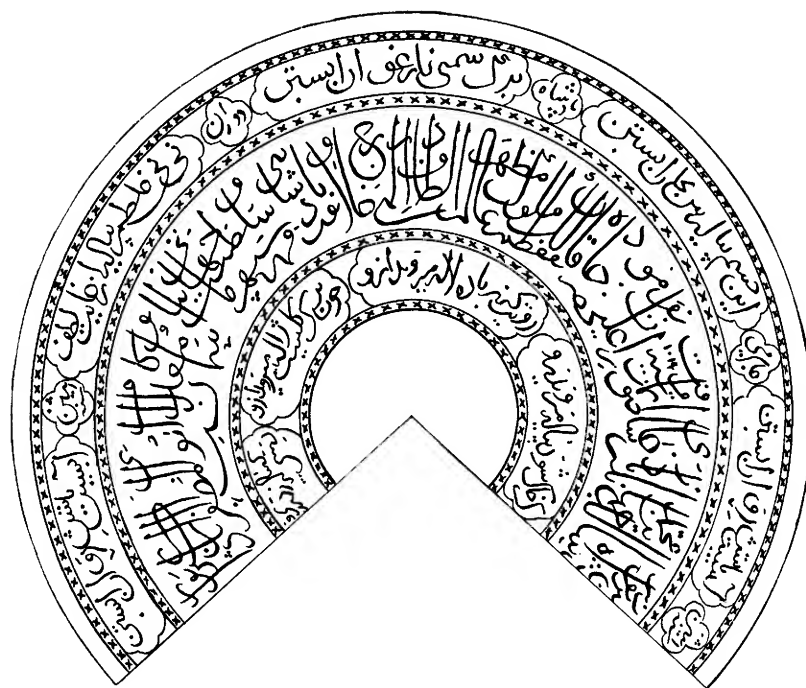
The second quatrain, located on the lower part of the cup, reads:

Through wine, the tulip grows on thy face.
It is like a rose petal: dew grows from it.
If the hand that took the cup from thine
Should become dust, a cup will grow from it.⁵

Between the verses of the upper and lower quatrain is engraved: "[in the cartouches, here distinguished by—] The wine cup/ of the emperor/ of the Age/ second [regnal] year." Around the central band is written: "By command of His Majesty, the Great Khaqan, Lord of the Kings of the World, Manifestator of Divine Favors in the Offices of



*Nephrite
Wine Cup*



*Drawing of
the inscriptions
on the Nephrite
Wine Cup*

Caliphate and Kingship, the Sun in the Firmament of World Sovereignty, the Moon in the Sky of Justice and Felicity, Abu'l-Muzaffar, the son of King Akbar, Nur ad-Din Muhammad Jahangir the Emperor, the form of the cup attained completion [in the] year 1016.”⁶

The calligraphic decoration and the phrasing of the verses and inscriptions on this cup reflect the influence upon Jahangir of his Timurid ancestors. The Mughal revival of Timurid decorative style that occurred during his reign found expression in the skillful and disciplined cutting of jade objects with incised medallions of calligraphy. The rhythm and spirit of such calligraphic ornamentation are well known in later Safavid arts as well. Not only does the style of works commissioned by Jahangir reflect such precedents, but also we know that Jahangir was especially fond of collecting the very rare gems and precious stones owned by Ulugh-Beg, who was Timur’s grandson, and other fifteenth-century Timurid rulers.⁷ Jahangir even mentions some Ulugh-Beg items in his memoirs.

The Guennol cup is, no doubt, not only one of the earliest, but certainly also among the finest of Jahangir’s jades. It exemplifies the ruler’s preference for a synthesis of Timurid and Mughal designs, which characterized all the arts of his time, and particularly the early Mughal style of jade carving.

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NEPHRITE WINE CUP

Height, $2\frac{3}{16}$ inches; diameter, $2\frac{15}{16}$ inches

Mughal; India, Jahangir period, dated 1607/8 A.D.

Ex COLL.: Sotheby’s, London, sale, December 16, 1971, lot 70.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Robert Skelton, "The Relations between Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," in *The Westward Influence of the Chinese Arts from the 14th to the 18th Century*, ed. William Watson, London, 1972, pp. 98–110, pl. 26d; *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1982, p. 117, no. 350.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1978; *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, April 21–August 22, 1982, no. 350.

NOTES

1. Robert Skelton, "The Relations between Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," in *The Westward Influence of the Chinese Arts from the 14th to the 18th Century*, ed. William Watson, London, 1972, pp. 98–110.

2. Stuart Cary Welch, *The Arts of Mughal India*, New York, 1964, p. 75.

3. Among the documented pieces carved from jade and either inscribed and/or dated to various years of Jahangir's reign are the following twelve objects, listed chronologically (the Guennol cup would be the second earliest piece known):

Thumb ring

Carved and inscribed "Shah Salim" [Jahangir's name before he ascended the throne]

Late Akbar period, late 16th century

Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Grace Morley, "On Applied Arts of India in Bharat Kala Bhavan" in *Chhavi*, Banaras, India, 1971, colorplate VIII, fig. 239a.

Agate Bowl

Inscribed

Date corresponds to 1611

Courtauld Institute Galleries, London

Cup

Inscribed with praises of the emperor's justice

1613

Victoria and Albert Museum, London

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Skelton, "Relations between the Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," pl. 26e.

Tankard with loop handle

Inscribed with dedicatory inscriptions of Ulugh-Beg, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan

Date corresponds to 1613

Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *The Arts of Islam*, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1976, p. 129, no. 114

Cup in the form of grape leaves, ornamented in high relief in the Ming Style

Made [or possibly inscribed only] at Mandu in the twelfth regnal year of Jahangir

Date corresponds to 1617

Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Morley, "On Applied Arts," pl. 11.

Opium cup

Inscribed with date and name Mandu [possibly the place where it was made]

1616–17

Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Morley, "On Applied Arts," pl. 10.

Inkpot

Inscribed with note that the piece was completed for

Jahangir by the artist Mu'min

Date corresponds to 1619

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Anthony Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World*, Austin, Texas, 1979, no. 79.

Thumb ring

Carved and inscribed "Shah Salim" [Jahangir's name before he ascended the throne]

Late Akbar period, late 16th century

Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Grace Morley, "On Applied Arts of India in Bharat Kala Bhavan," in *Chhavi*, Banaras, India, 1971, colorplate VIII, fig. 239a.

Scent bowl

Inscribed

1626

Prince of Wales Museum of Western India, Bombay

Dark green Timurid wine cup

Inscribed: Ulugh-Beg [and various auspicious wishes];

Jahangir [under handle]

Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Morley, "On Applied Arts," pl. 9, fig. 240.

Timurid tankard

Inscribed with dedication of Ulugh-Beg

The British Museum, London

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Robert Skelton, "Jades moghols," *L'Oeil*, 96, December 1962, p. 44, fig. 5.

Small pot

Inscribed with names of owners, Ulugh-Beg's nephew Ala al-daula, and Jahangir

Undated

Asian Art Museum of San Francisco

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Skelton, "Relations between Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," pp. 101–2.

4. Robert Skelton's translation appears in *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1982, no. 350. In a letter, Skelton refers to a poem by Hafiz and remarks, further, that a "similar juxtaposition of *saman* ('jasmine or white lily') and *arghavan* ('judas tree') is found in a line of Hafiz's *Divan* [see edition edited by Ahmad and Na'ini (Teheran, 1976), p. 300: 'The judas tree will give a carnelian cup to the white lily.']"

5. Skelton suggests the comparison to a passage from Omar Khayyam; no reference is offered.

6. The Hijra year 1016 began on April 28, 1607, and the second regnal year ended on March 19, 1608. The cup therefore was made sometime between those dates.

7. Skelton, "Relations between Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," p. 102.

Nephrite Lotus-form Jar

Mughal jades and rock-crystal carvings in the form of plants attest to the skill of Indian hard-stone carvers, continuing a long tradition that began with fine objects made for export to the Roman Empire. Vessels used as hookah bases, ewers, or cups, and utilizing foliate shapes or ornament were common.

Robert Skelton has published an example in The British Museum carved in the shape of a half gourd which is undoubtedly a piece of Indian origin, although, as he notes, it may take its inspiration from China.¹ The British Museum jade is inscribed and dated 1647 in the reign of emperor Shah Jahan (r. 1627–58). Under Shah Jahan's reign—and patronage—ornate jade carvings, sometimes decorated with inlaid precious stones, achieved a highly sophisticated level of technique and opulence. The Chinese imitated this style in their jades during the early eighteenth century.

A small jade vessel in the Guennol Collection is representative of this era of magnificence, displaying the same virtuosity of execution and design. It does not have the elaboration of scrollwork or a stylized lotus on its base as The British Museum jade does; it succeeds almost entirely on the elegance of its form. A dark green nephrite globular vessel, it has a slightly flared foot rim and lip, but, save for a fluted band of repeated vertical lobes simulating lotus petals, is otherwise left undecorated. Another example of Mughal lotiform shape is an opium cup from the reign of Shah Jahan's predecessor, Jahangir (1605–1627), which is carved with a band of naturalistic lotus petals, now in the Bharat Kala Bhavan, Banaras.²

In the absence of inscription or date, the attribution of the Guennol jade lotiform vessel relies on style and form: both the wide lotiband decoration and the jar's specific shape hold a clue to its date. Although exact parallels for this vessel are not known, related objects and contemporary paintings help us to place it in its proper context.

Jade vessels from the Timurid period (1378–1506) relate closely to both metal and ceramic shapes of contemporary and even earlier date. A jade tankard in the Gulbenkian Collection, Lisbon, was made for the Timurid ruler Ulugh Beg, for whom the tankard was originally inscribed, and can therefore be attributed to the period 1417–49. Significantly, it was owned by emperors Jahangir and Shah Jahan.³ Fifteenth-century Timurid tankards were first suggested as parallels for the Guennol jar by Howard Ricketts, who noted a resemblance to Timurid metalwork and jade wares. These wares were clearly intended to be drinking vessels, but the Guennol jade jar, with its narrow opening and shallow rim, belongs to another class of object, known as *kouzeh*, “jar” or “small vase.”⁴



*Nephrite
Lotus-form Jar*

As far as the decoration is concerned, from at least as early as the twelfth century carved lotus panels appear on Iranian metal and ceramic vessels, especially around the circumference or lower half of the body. Safavid miniature paintings, especially those of the Shiraz School, show such ornamental panels on all types of vessels from cooking pots to vases and candlesticks. A rock-crystal wine pot in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art has a band of stylized convex lotus panels, ending in a pattern of half circles at both top and bottom, like the Guennol jar.⁵ The Los Angeles pot also has a domed lid with radiating, carved panels. The lip of the Guennol jar is slightly everted, which may suggest that it once had a similar cover. Some jade vessels of Mughal manufacture also have the vegetal form and decoration.⁶

It has been further suggested that the key to the use of the Guennol jar lies in Persian and Mughal miniatures of the sixteenth century, in which vessels of undetermined material are illustrated specifically as inkwells or containers for paint.⁷ The foot, rim, and relative size of the Guennol jar match perfectly with the forms of vessels in these paintings. Inkwells were made in two basic shapes in

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: either a small, domed, cylindrical casket or a small footed vase. These are commonly made of metal, but there is a magnificent jade inkwell in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, dated, inscribed, and signed by the artist, Mu'min.⁸

Two examples of little footed vases employed as inkwells can be found in two Akbari period (1542–1605) miniatures: *Mercury in Gemini*, from the 1583 *Kitab-i Sa'at* manuscript, in which Mercury is shown in his traditional role as a scribe,⁹ and in a closely related miniature painting of about 1570–80 in the Edwin Binney, III, Collection, depicting a teacher and his pupil.¹⁰ These paintings and the simple decoration of the Guennol jar suggest that it may have been employed as an inkwell or paint pot, and that, along with other similar objects, it may date from the Jahangir period, or even earlier. The conservative nature of the development of patterns and designs should be considered, since once a motif or shape was established in the repertoire of Mughal crafts—or Turkish, Iranian, or Deccani, for that matter—it tended to remain popular for a long time.

A.G.P.

NEPHRITE LOTUS-FORM JAR

Height, 3¾ inches; diameter, 2⅞ inches

Mughal; India, early 17th century

NOTES

1. The dated jade wine cup from the Oscar Raphael Collection, now in The British Museum, is published in Robert Skelton, "Jades moghols," *L'Oeil*, 96, December 1962, p. 44, fig. 4.

2. Grace Morley, "On Applied Arts of India in Bharat Kala Bhavan," in *Chhavi*, Banaras, 1971, pl. 10.

3. *The Arts of Islam*, Arts Council of Great Britain, London, 1976, p. 129, no. 114.

4. See Melikian Chirvani, *Le Bronze iranien*, Paris, n.d., pp. 94–95.

5. *The Arts of India and Nepal: The Alice and Nasli Heeramaneck Collection*, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 1966, no. 224, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, acc. no. M76.2.4a,b.

6. A jade wine cup, published in *The Arts of India and Nepal*, no. 221, now in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, acc. no. M76.2.1, and a jade wine cup, illustrated in *Islamic Art from India*, Spinks & Son, London, 1980, p. 25, colorplate 31, from a private collection. Compare also a dark green jade melon-shaped dish in the Asian Art Museum, San Francisco, acc. no. B60–1485.

7. Brooke Travelstead, intern in the Department of Oriental Art, The Brooklyn Museum in 1981, is the author of this idea.

8. Anthony Welch, *Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World*, Austin, Texas, 1979, no. 79.

9. See Sotheby's, London, sale, April 12, 1976, lot 192, fig. 26a.

10. *Indian Miniature Painting from the Collection of Edwin Binney, III: the Mughal and Deccani School*, Portland, Oregon, 1973, p. 32, no. 13.

Nephrite Archer's Thumb Ring

The Mughal emperors were avid hunters and great warriors, and they are shown in these roles in their formal portraits, the records of the court, and in their personal diaries. Their jade thumb rings were precious as well as functional items.

The ovoid shape of the Guennol jeweled jade ring conforms to the wearer's thumb, and would have protected him from the taut bowstring. It is carved of pale milk-white nephrite and is elaborately decorated with inlaid rubies and emeralds, each stone set in a network of gold filigree. A large ruby at the center is carved in the form of a closed peony, with each petal naturalistically rendered. The central stone is surrounded by three smaller five-petaled ruby flowers and two ruby pomegranates, which encircle the stone and join at the back in a five-petaled flower.

Although the shape of the ring may ultimately derive from examples in jade dating from the fifth century B.C., in the Chinese eastern Chou period, the rings are a testament to the quality achieved in carving hard-stone objects in India by the seventeenth century.¹ A Mughal jade thumb ring in the collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan in Banaras predates the reign of Emperor Jahangir (1605–1627) since it is inscribed “Shah Salim,” the royal prince's title before he ascended the throne.² It is considered to be the earliest Mughal jade. Stylistically comparable with the Guennol ring, the Banaras ring was originally inlaid with precious stones in a Persian-style flower design outlined in gold. Two jade thumb rings of the Shah Jahan period (r. 1627–58) recently exhibited in London are more closely related to the Guennol ring.³ Their shape and stylized inlaid decoration are also consistent.

The decoration of contemporary Mughal architecture and the objects designed for use in the Mughal court exhibit many stylistic similarities to this ring—especially an abundance of naturalistic floral motifs. The network of gold filigree tendrils inset with precious stones was a popular technique used in carving hard stones, especially during Shah Jahan's reign, when elaborately carved and inlaid jade objects were made primarily for ceremonial use and royal gifts. Intricate floral arabesques, possibly derived from carved marble decoration evident in the architecture of the period at Delhi or Agra, are unmistakable elements of carved decorative objects and are often used in textile design and in the richly illuminated margins of royal album folios.⁴ The indication of petals carved on the surface of gems also appears on contemporary carved rock-crystal utensils. Such examples are typical of the Mughal taste for elaborate surface embellishment, a preferred style that continued in the fine crafted work of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries throughout the Mughal empire.⁵

*Nephrite
Archer's
Thumb Ring*



The vendor of the Guennol ring expressly indicated that it had been made in Peking for the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan. From Shah Jahan, it purportedly passed to Nadir Shah, a Turk from Khorasan, who by 1736 had overthrown the Safavid dynasty in Persia and then invaded India and accomplished the sack of Delhi in 1739, taking as booty the famous Peacock Throne itself. History records that the ring eventually was offered to a maharaja of Tanjore, perhaps as part of an alliance between the southern Indian prince and Nadir Shah, but since, stylistically, the ring appears to have been manufactured in India in the mid-seventeenth century—and for Shah Jahan—and since no evidence suggests that an alliance between a Tanjore maharaja and the usurper Nadir Shah ever occurred,⁶ a Chinese origin is not likely. Many pieces of Mughal jewelry, carved dagger handles, or other precious objects have emerged from collections of southern Indian royalty, however, and a connection between any of these and the Mughal court is certainly more plausible. Since the Guennol ring surpasses most of the carved and inlaid jades of the period in quality and workmanship, it may well have been manufactured in the royal atelier of the Mughals.

A.G.P.

NEPHRITE ARCHER'S THUMB RING

Length, $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches; maximum width, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Mughal; India, Shah Jahan period, mid-17th century

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1977.

NOTES

1. An excavated jade thumb ring from Chung-chou-lu, phase four, is illustrated in *Lo-yang Chung-chou-lu*, pl. LXXII; two corresponding rings from western collections are in Soame Jenyns, *Chinese Archaic Jades in the British Museum*, London, 1951, pl. XXXIII c; and H.R. Bishop, *The Bishop Collection: Investigations and Studies of Jade*, II, 109, New York, 1966, no. 339. For a comparison of Indian and Chinese jade carvings, see Robert Skelton, "The Relations between Chinese and Indian Jade Carving Traditions," in *The Westward Influence of the Chinese Arts from the 14th to the 18th Century*, ed. William Watson, London, 1972, pp. 98–110.
2. See Robert Skelton, "Jades moghols," *L'Oeil*, 96, December 1962, p. 44; Grace Morley, "On Applied Arts of India in Bharat Kala Bhavan" in *Chhavi*, Banaras, India, 1971, p. 112.
3. See *The Indian Heritage: Court Life and Arts under Mughal Rule*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 1982, nos. 304, 305, both in the collection of the Victoria and Albert Museum.
4. Skelton, "Jades moghols," p. 44.
5. Anthony Welch (*Calligraphy in the Arts of the Muslim World*, Austin, Texas, 1979, p. 191) considers Shah Jahan's taste for lapidary arts to be responsible for the fine if not frozen quality of painting done under his patronage.
6. Waldemar Hansen, *The Peacock Throne: The Drama of Mogul India*, New York, 1972, pp. 488 ff.

Ivory Cow and Calf

THE tender relationship of mother and child is here represented in the ivory figure of a cow and her suckling calf. The nurturing mother is a theme ubiquitously represented in Indian art by the cow and calf; Surabhi, the legendary mother of all cows, is revered as a wish-fulfilling deity.¹ Usually the image of a cow suggests a second theme, the subject related to a Hindu cult that flourished in India from the sixteenth century on. In the *Bhagavata Purana*, Krishna is portrayed as the divine protector of the cows and their attendants in the forest of Brindavan. In both painting and sculpture, the subject is celebrated in a prescribed composition, with Krishna standing at the center flanked by the cows and cowherds; certain stylistic details would vary according to region.

But the majestic posture of the cow and her uplifted head and eyes focused upward suggest that the image may have been intended for use in a small personal shrine devoted to Krishna, and would have thus originally accompanied a separate figure of the god. Many kinds of animals were depicted in ivory but only those associated with Hindu subjects, such as the animal vehicles of the Hindu gods, would have

been elevated to the status of icons. In spite of a marked difference of purpose, ivory was considered a popular medium for figure carvings, along with objects cast in bronze, modeled in clay, or carved from stone or wood.

The sensitive rendering of the cow in minute and naturalistic detail is characteristic of Mughal rather than of Hindu craftsmanship of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and, although it may be

*Ivory Cow
and Calf*



difficult to prove that the workmanship is from the Mughal court, the carving is skillful, and the treatment of volumes and form are features of the naturalism that Mughal artists strove to achieve. The contours of the cow and suckling calf are exactly delineated and their placement on the pedestal is unusually elegant for any ivory carving of the period; Rajput ivories were often more hieratic and stiff.

Carving from a sizable elephant tusk, the carver has used the diameter of the tusk for the circular pedestal on which the figures stand. Many contemporary ivory figures were decorated with polychrome and ornamented with a veneer of gold or mica, but such embellishments are not present here. They could have been worn away through time or perhaps were never deemed necessary as an enhancement to the form. Ivory figures from other regions in India, such as Orissa or Vijayanagara, were usually further embellished with scrollwork or other surface carving.

Paintings depicting the theme of Krishna and the cows are seldom naturalistic, but the poses of the figures are comparable to the cow and calf of the Guennol sculpture. Mughal studies from nature show such sensitivity in their depiction, and studies of cows in painting do exist.² A monumental relief at Mahabalipuram of the seventh century has a related subject,³ and an eighth-century example in stone, now in the collection of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, shows the cow and calf theme with the same lifelike quality.⁴ A study of a seated cow in ivory, now in the Prince of Wales Museum of West India, provides the closest stylistic parallel.⁵ The piece is attributed tentatively to Jaipur in Rajasthan, and dated to the early eighteenth century. The figure is about one-third the size of the Guennol study. The surface is described as being painted blue with naturalistic brown and white circular patches and a white mark over its forehead. The eyes are given more emphasis than the Guennol piece by means of a single angled line around the eye, but the carving is generally less sensitive. Only the tail and the necklace of bells correspond in form.

A.G.P.

IVORY COW AND CALF

Height, 3½ inches; length, 3 inches

North India, about 1700

NOTES

1. Arthur Llewellyn Basham, *The Wonder That Was India*, 1st American ed., New York, 1959, p. 319.

2. See a folio attributed to the Mughal painter Basawan, about 1570–75, in Stuart Cary Welch, *A Flower from Every Meadow*, New York, 1973, no. 55.

4. Pratapaditya Pal, *The Divine Presence: Asian Sculptures from the Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lenart*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1978, p. 18, no. 6.

5. Sadashiv Gorakshkar, *Animals in Indian Art*, Prince of Wales Museum of West India, Bombay, 1979, no. 274.

Neolithic Ax

This massive, extraordinarily mottled and veined Guennol jade—a remarkable example of the earliest jade arts in China—may originally have been intended for use as a weapon or tool. Its rectangular shape and angular edge undoubtedly derived from a more primitive stone ax. It is traditionally thought that these lustrous and smoothly polished surfaces were accomplished with an abrasive, such as quartz powder or some other ground stone, used in combination with a stone cutting tool to shape the object. The brilliant colors of the Guennol jade, ranging from dark red brown to yellow ocher, are the result of a particular combination of chemical elements present in nephrite.

Ax blades and chisels of jade have been found at Neolithic sites throughout northern China. The earliest examples are often sizable pieces of stone, and, although generally they are otherwise entirely devoid of ornamentation, their cut or beveled edges reveal that they were “artifacts” and were not just “found objects.” A group of such objects was discovered in the region of the P’an-shan cemetery in Kansu Province. (Many of the implements from this particular site are now located in Stockholm, having been brought back by the Swedish archaeologist J.G. Andersson).¹

Jade was not actually mined in China, but, instead, had to be transported a great distance, from central Asia. Considering the difficulty in acquiring and cutting nephrite, Neolithic jade objects most probably were used as ceremonial substitutes for ordinary axes rather than as utilitarian objects.

Since many jade implements related to the Guennol ax were discovered in association with burial sites, they very likely had ritual significance. Such early commentaries as the *Chou Li* (“*Rituals of the Chou*”), a work dating from the fourth to the third century B.C., purporting to describe Chou dynasty (about 1027–222 B.C.) rites, may not be entirely reliable, yet many of their observations have been confirmed by archaeological evidence. Rectangular plaques comparable to the Guennol ax are referred to as *kuei*, one of a broad range of ritual jade objects, and served as insignia of high rank as well as ritual sacrificial axes.²

Another early description by the first-century-A.D. historian Yuan K’ang mentions a so-called Jade Age that is said to have evolved between the Stone Age and the Copper Age. He has dated the making of jade weapons to the reign of the legendary ruler Huang Ti, the “Yellow Emperor” (third millennium B.C.).³ Remarkably, recent archaeological evidence indeed links the earliest jade objects with that period.

There are no perforations on the Guennol ax to suggest that it was originally joined to a handle. However, a similar chisel in the Ostasiatiska Museet, Stockholm, is described as having lost its butt end, and the



Neolithic
Ax

Guennol monolith may also have been cut off at its base;⁴ the brighter remaining surface coloration at one of the narrower ends would also suggest this.

This is the earliest of the Chinese archaic jades in the Guennol Collection. It is reported to have come from the collection of the emperor Ch'ien-lung (r. 1735–95), although this cannot be verified.

A.G.P.

NEOLITHIC AX

Nephrite

Length, 10³/₈ inches

China, Neolithic period, about 2500 B.C.

NOTES

1. See William Willets, *Foundations of Chinese Art*, Singapore, 1968, p. 48.
2. Daisy Lion-Goldschmidt and Jean Claude Moreau-Gobard, *Chinese Art: Bronzes, Jade, Sculpture, Ceramics*, trans. Diana Imber, rev. ed., 1980, p. 92.
3. Willets, *Foundations of Chinese Art*, p. 41.
4. Ibid., p. 53, pl. 6.

Shang Jade Bear

Although most archaic Chinese jade objects conform to the shapes of ancient ceremonial weapons, the small animal sculptures and plaques of the late Shang and early western Chou period (from the thirteenth to the eighth centuries B.C.) are a remarkable departure in form and conception from the known tradition. Unlike the broad, flat blades that are worked from slabs of jade, the animals were carved from small blocks of the material. They are miniature, realistic, and sometimes enhanced with surface decoration. They do relate, however, to other known Shang sculptures—namely, to the animals carved in marble.¹

The small jade bear in the Guennol Collection is carved out of a light green nephrite with some dark brown discoloration. It is remarkable for its exceptional design and finely executed detail. The bear is shown crouching in a frontal pose with arms and legs rigidly projecting forward. Like many similar figures, it has a surface covered with an abstract meander pattern incised in double lines to indicate eyes, nostrils, lips, and claws. A hole pierced through its back suggests that

the bear was meant to be worn as an amulet. All that protrudes beyond the blocklike form are the four paws, the ears, and the snout of the animal. Otherwise, such details as the arms and the curve of the folded legs are indicated by the shape of the lozengelike incised lines that adapt to the forms they decorate. An unusual grooved line on the back defines the rump of the seated animal.

Recent archaeological excavations at late Shang period sites in the region of its last capital, An-yang, have uncovered several small animal sculptures that directly parallel the Guennol bear. Among these recent discoveries are several figurines found in the tomb of Fu Hao, a royal consort and important lady general of Wu Ting, the fourth Shang king at An-yang. Of the two hundred bronze vessels discovered in her tomb—which was unearthed intact and untouched after its discovery in 1976—more than sixty artifacts are inscribed with her name. There were also over six hundred sculptures, numerous ivory vessels, and five hundred carved bone objects, among many other items. Most are thus far considered to date from the late An-yang period (about 1300 to about 1030 B.C.).²

The twelve or thirteen jade figurines found in Fu Hao's tomb share many artistic and technical attributes with the Guennol bear. These figurines include an elephant, a kneeling human figure, and a bear. The pupils and eyes of the latter are incised with the same simple shapes that are found on the Guennol bear, and the method indicating arms and elbows is comparable. It is only their size that differs. The figurines are compact in shape and likewise carved with a minimum of material removed from the original block.³ Robert Bagley notes that the Neolithic technique of carving jade and other hard stone may have limited the artist to rigidly symmetrical and rectangular forms, which may explain the predominance of stiff frontal poses and angular shapes among these figures. Because sculptures carved in other, more workable materials, such as marble or even cast bronze, were also conceived in these primitive blocky forms, it appears that the artists of the time were not yet interested in naturalism—an approach to sculptural form that became more popular by the eastern Chou period (about the fifth century B.C.). However, the surfaces of such early jade sculpture are often characterized by technically exacting flowing linear designs. Patterns applied to objects in the period were more readily a part of the artist's repertoire. In describing some of the Fu Hao jade figures, Bagley observes that the artist used considerable subtlety to embellish the surfaces "and where necessary can serve to supply an eye or define a shoulder or the corner of a jaw"—as on the Guennol bear. On the whole, the incised surface lines were meant to be "nonrepresentational," in contrast to the *horror vacui* surfaces of bronze ritual vessels of the period.⁴

The symbolic associations of the animal and human figurines have not yet been made. Both wild and domesticated animals, those traditionally associated with fertility (birds and fish), and fantastic mystical animals (dragons or serpents), were typical subjects of Shang period



*Shang
Jade Bear*

art. The postures offer little clue to their exact meaning. Like the seated bear, most are drilled with a hole indicating that they were meant to be worn as amulets, but this still does not clarify the amulets' purpose.

Among the numerous early jade figurines extant today, the only other jade bear known outside of China is a small carving in the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts.⁴ Also a miniature, this two-and-one-eighth-inch-high squatting bear does not display the same surface embellishments as the Guennol figure, although its extraordinary silhouette seems to be a common feature of early Shang jade sculptures. Another small seated bear, in the Mr. and Mrs. Myron S. Falk, Jr., Collection, New York,⁵ carved of marble, may also be compared to the Guennol jade. Although its eyes and mouth are indicated by incised lines in the same manner as the Guennol bear, the other one is more naturalistically modeled, and the belly and rump are gently rounded. Otherwise, the Falk marble figurine is equally blocky.

Even scholars who have published descriptions of such small archaic figurines have not adequately pointed out the similarity of these sculptures to the crouching animal-shaped supports of bronze vessels, a common feature of Han bronzes from the first century B.C. on. The bear was especially popular, and was often represented realistically with its arms upraised to hold the vessel.⁶ Once animal legs became common on the vessels, the animals were represented more naturalistically, perhaps denoting an increasingly confident understanding on the part of the artists themselves. Although this is not to suggest that the function of the jade bear was in any way similar, future research that may elucidate this connection is eagerly awaited.

A.G.P.

SHANG JADE BEAR

Height, 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

China, Shang dynasty, An-yang period, about 1300—about 1030 B.C.

EX COLL.: Mrs. Rafi Y. Mottahedeh, New York; Sotheby–Parke Bernet sale, 1979, lot 271; Alice Boney, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1975, no. 44, ill. p. 35; Simone Hartman, "Saleroom News," *Arts of Asia*, 9, January 1979, p. 119.

EXHIBITED: *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages*, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, May–June 1975, no. 44; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1980.

NOTES

1. See George J. Lee, "An-yang Marble 'Elephant'," in *The Guennol Collection*, I, ed. Ida Ely Rubin, New York, 1975, pp. 257–61.

2. Robert W. Bagley, "The High Yinxu Phase (Anyang Period)," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. Wen Fong, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1980, p. 178.

3. Ibid., pp. 181–82, 189, nos. 39, 40, for a jade figurine and a jade elephant, both excavated in 1976 from Tomb No. 5, An-yang, Henan Province, and no. 40. The Fu Hao jade bear is illustrated in Hsiao Chun, "New Archaeological Finds from the Yin Ruins," *China Pictorial*, I, 1978, p. 26, no. 2.

4. Bagley, "The High Yinxu Phase," p. 182.

5. Sherman E. Lee, *A History of Far Eastern Art*, New York, n.d. [1964], p. 35, fig. 19.

6. Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1975, no. 43, pp. 34–35, ill. p. 35.

7. See William Watson, *The Genius of China: An Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China*, London, 1973, p. 103, nos. 152–53, two feet from a bronze vessel representing bears rearing over birds, found in 1968 in the tomb of the princess Ton Wan at Man-che'eng, Hopei; and p. 111, no. 175, a dated gilt-bronze wine warmer supported by three bears, excavated in 1962 at Yu-yu, Shansi.

For a similar squatting pair of two-and-one-half-inch-high gilt-bronze bear caryatids inlaid with turquoise, also dated to western Han, see René-Yvon Lefebvre d'Argenée, *Chinese Treasures from the Avery Brundage Collection*, The Asia Society, New York, 1968, no. 30, ill. p. 45. Their size and the holes in their backs suggest that they were used as furniture legs.

Ceremonial Knife

This ancient jade tablet is remarkable for its richly varied colors and bold natural markings. Its irregular trapezoidal form is common in archaic Chinese jades. Although such shapes probably ultimately derive from Neolithic stone tools, their function has not been firmly identified. The Guennol tablet in the form of a knife has a clearly honed cutting edge and a detail typical of later Chou dynasty pieces—a single circular perforation drilled from both sides.

Such shapes are found with other objects in excavated burial sites throughout China from the Neolithic period through the Han dynasty (206 B.C.–221 A.D.). Because the provenance of this example is no longer known, it is difficult to date it precisely, but on the basis of stylistic comparisons to excavated and documented material it could have been made in the eastern Chou period (770–221 B.C.).

The stone is nephrite, mined in central Asia and imported into China from earliest times until around the eighteenth century, when other available sources of nephrite and the similar stone jadeite were discovered. Jade must have been extremely important to the Shang and Chou to warrant the long and hazardous journey required to procure it.¹

The development of jade burial objects began in the first dynastic period, when the Shang ruled in small kingdoms in central China. Early jade blades and axes were typical at this time, and some inscribed pieces have been discovered. Contemporary bronze weapons were duplicated in jade, but only one new form, the halberd, was added to the existing repertoire of shapes. Once functional, such objects are thought to have been venerated by the Shang dynasty for symbolic reasons. Some Neolithic jade ax-shaped pieces obviously were used for cutting; other jades in similar forms served only a symbolic purpose, and those were used solely in burial. Even when their surfaces were left undecorated, one or more circular perforations were always present to attach a wood handle or grip to the blade.²

The Chou, a nomadic people, came from the west and overcame the Shang in the eleventh century B.C., establishing a federation of dependent states. While new shapes in jade continued to appear, there was little change in the pre-existing jade types. Forms were continually simplified, but their surfaces sometimes were embellished with incised patterns, paralleling those seen on bronzes. In the eastern Chou period, interest in the world of spirits seems to have revived, a movement reflected in the new forms of mythical creatures found in jade.

In the Oriental Ceramic Society exhibition of 1975 and in more recent shows of newly excavated early Chinese material, knife- and ax-shaped archaic jades are dated according to the age of the findspot or comparable excavated material from dated sites. At this time, no paral-



*Ceremonial
Knife*

lel for the Guennol piece has been published in excavation reports, but a strikingly similar knife-shaped tablet appears in the Winthrop Collection in the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, Massachusetts.³ The Winthrop and the Guennol jade blades not only compare in size and shape, but also bear such a startling resemblance in their colors and natural markings that they could even be carved from the same stone. Both range from a translucent green to an evenly calcified powdery white, and both

display the same dark bluish-green striation at the center. The Winthrop jade has a horizontal cutting edge and three incised perforations; the Guennol tablet's cutting edge has been designed along one of the narrower sides opposite the singular circular hole. Until further information becomes available, Max Loehr's eastern Chou dynasty date for the Winthrop piece can be considered the probable date for the Guennol tablet.

A.G.P.

CEREMONIAL KNIFE

Nephrite

Maximum width, $3\frac{3}{8}$ inches; length, $7\frac{1}{4}$ inches

China, eastern Chou dynasty, 770–221 B.C.

EX COLL.: Cunliffe Collection, London.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Early Chinese Art*, Bluett and Sons, Ltd., London, 1973, no. 57, pl. B.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1977.

NOTES

1. For a history of early Chinese jades, see Jessica Rawson, *Chinese Jade throughout the Ages*, Oriental Ceramic Society, London, 1975, pp. 5–11.

2. Robert W. Bagley, "The Beginnings of the Bronze Age: The Erlitou Culture Period," in *The Great Bronze Age of China*, ed. Wen Fong, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1978, p. 73.

3. Max Loehr, *Ancient Chinese Jades*, Cambridge, Mass., 1975, p. 231, no. 345.

Scepter (Kuei)

This simple form was probably a ritual ax, since its contours reveal a sloping beveled cutting edge and a narrower grip at the other end that may have been meant to be fitted into a handle. There is no attachment hole or perforation, as in some other early jade and stone implements. The smoothness of the polished surface emphasizes the stone's rich gradations of color, dark brown accented with reddish striations.

The Guennol *kuei* is similar in color, shape, and size to a group of Neolithic polished jade axes found in Yunnan province in southern China in the nineteenth century and now in the collection of The British Museum.¹ Other related pieces have been excavated at Yuanmo in the same region and published by Chinese archaeologists.



Scepter
(Kuei)



*Detail of Scepter
(Kuei) with
inscription
used by Emperor
Ch'ien-lung*

An unusual feature of the Guennol *kuei* is the addition of a six-character seal inscription incised on one side. Richard Vinograd has deciphered the inscription as “*Shih-ch'uan-lao-jen-wan-kuei*.” *Shih-ch'uan-lao-jen* is a sobriquet of the Ch'ien-lung emperor (1711–99, r. 1735–95). *Wan-kuei* can mean either a “scepter for amusement” or “a curio, or antique jade scepter.”²

There are no other markings on the piece. The Ch'ien-lung emperor was an insatiable collector, and this *kuei*, like other objects he collected, may have been bestowed as a royal gift. Although no similar archaic jades are known to have been in his collection, many of the later jade objects he collected are on view in the Gugong, the restored imperial palace in Peking.

The piece is a document of the Neolithic period, showing the quality of predynastic craftsmanship and an example of the connoisseurship of the Ch'ien-lung emperor who later prized it. Whether it was originally used as a scepter or as an ax, its shape dates to the earliest period when jades were used. Such objects were appreciated not only by the Ch'ien-lung emperor and his contemporaries but by subsequent and now anonymous owners since the eighteenth century.

A.G.P.

SCEPTER (*KUEI*)

Jade

Maximum width, 1¼ inches; length, 4½ inches

China, Neolithic period, about 2000 B.C.

PROVENANCE: Yunnan province, China, 19th century.

EX COLL.: Emperor Ch'ien-lung (1711–99, r. 1735–95).

NOTES

1. Jessica Rawson, Deputy Keeper of Oriental Antiquities, The British Museum, has informed us of this group, one of which (OA 3882) is approximately ten centimeters long.

2. Vinograd also notes (to Poster, August 1980) that “the *Shih-ch'uan-lao-jen* sobriquet, which can be rendered roughly as ‘The Elder of the Ten Perfections,’ was chosen by Ch'ien-lung in his late years, and likely is a reference to the fulfillment of his grandiose collection projects. The name is listed in most standard name indexes of Chinese artists; see also *Chung-wen-ta-tien*, Taipei, 1973, p. 1988, no. 370.”

Chun-yao Glazed Stoneware Dish

This shallow, circular-shaped dish is made of gray clay. It stands on a low circular foot worked with great care and painted with a reddish tan slip. The shape is enhanced by the subtlety of a slightly everted rim. The thick coating of blue glaze with mauve highlights distinguishes this type of ceramic ware. Collectors of objects made for the scholar's study, such as this miniature dish, seek out the finely potted Chun-yao ware for its visual as well as its textural qualities.

As the political expansion of the Sung empire stabilized, arts and culture flourished for more than three centuries until the Manchurian

*Chun-yao Glazed
Stoneware Dish*



invasions in 1127, when the Sung fled south. One of the great aesthetic achievements of the northern Sung was their ceramics, combining technical refinement and artistic expression in a range of surface decoration. Wares perfected in this period include the white porcelain Ting-yao wares and the Lung-ch'uan stonewares with carved relief decoration and celadon glazes, but Chun wares were equally treasured.

Chun ware originated in Honan province in northern China. It was produced from the northern Sung period (960–1127) through the Ming period (1369–1644). It was not considered an imperial ware. The name Chun derives from Chun-Chou, the place name of the region once associated with the finest wares, in what is now Yu-hsien, but evidence proves it was also made near Kai-f'eng, the northern Sung capital, and imitated throughout the Kai-f'eng region.

The quality of the blue glaze has been best described as “opal-escent.”¹ The iridescence is caused by the iron content of the glaze (as much as 1.6 to 2.5 percent). The glaze usually collects in large drops near the base, but the foot is traditionally left unglazed, as here. Another distinguishing characteristic of Chun glaze is the so-called worm-track effect of oxidation of copper in the glaze, sometimes replaced by a crackle pattern, less admired by connoisseurs.²

The most common shapes found in Chun wares are the large flower pots and bulb bowls, but Basil Gray points to the smaller objects as the finest examples of the ware, praising their appeal to the touch and their surface effects.³ The Guennol Chun ware dish exhibits the quintessential qualities of its period and type.

A.G.P.

CHUN-YAO GLAZED STONEWARE DISH

Diameter, 4½ inches; diameter of foot ring, 1⅞ inches

China, Sung period, about 12th century A.D.

NOTES

1. Basil Gray, *Early Chinese Pottery and Porcelain*, London, n.d. [1953], p. 32.
2. See Margaret Medley, *The Chinese Potter*, London, 1976, p. 118, for a discussion of the historical development of surface textures used in Chun wares.
3. Gray, *Early Chinese Pottery*, p. 32.

Chicken-blood-stone Objects

A mong the most prized of precious Chinese materials is the variegated red stone known as “chicken-blood stone,” so named for its brilliant red coloration. Chicken-blood stone, also known as heliotrope, is a green chalcedony, spotted red where oxidation has occurred. The Chinese were among the earliest to observe the crystal formation of rare stones and to classify them according to shape and type. As early as the fourteenth century, a connoisseurship text classified some eighteen different types of stones, noting, in addition to the sites of origin, the identifying features of color, texture, and appropriate uses.¹ Although heliotrope was not unique to China, it was much appreciated there. Chinese accounts specifically locate the point of origin of the most notable examples of heliotrope as the Precious Stone Cavern in Ch’eng-hua county, Chekiang province (southeastern China).

The color red was not only appreciated aesthetically, but also for its symbolic medical and magical associations. It came to be associated with alchemy and minerology, especially when embodied in red cinnabar (mercuric sulphide) and chicken-blood stone.² When correlated with the points of the compass, the color red became associated with the southern quadrant and with the Five Basic Elements. Such associations stem from early Chinese thought, in which the Five Elements determined both scientific and political doctrines. Cinnabar was considered to be the “drug of immortality,” and the ideograph for the color red therefore came to be used to describe any medicine, pill, or prescription.

Although ordinary examples of chicken-blood stones were fairly common, outstanding examples were considered to be quite rare. The best stones were often shaped into seal stones, thereby adding a cultural luster to their natural appeal, and increasing their preciousness. Objects carved from chicken-blood stone seem to have been appreciated as early as the middle Ming dynasty (fourteenth to fifteenth centuries) or earlier, but no documented examples of such age have been cited.

Chicken-blood stones were especially popular in China during the Ch’ing dynasty, when the Manchu emperors with whom we associate the palaces of Peking were in power. Emperor Ch’ien-lung (r. 1735–95) was known to have favored the materials for seal stones.

A number of examples have been attributed to the Ch’ing emperor on the basis of seal inscriptions. One seal stone in the Hosokawa Collection, Tokyo, for example, was presented by Ch’ien-lung to one of his courtiers, who in turn bestowed it upon the noted artist Ch’en Hung-shou (1768–1822), a poet, calligrapher, and one of the Eight Hsi-ling Masters of Chekiang.³ Other seals in the Hosokawa Collection



*Chicken-blood-stone
Brush Rest*

have similar histories, according to the names of the various owners noted in their inscriptions.⁴

The Guennol Collection contains one of the most outstanding groups of chicken-blood stones in the West. The largest object, considered the earliest of this type in the collection, is a brush rest. The carver has taken advantage of the natural contours of the stone to shape an object at once utilitarian and aesthetically appealing. The two saddle-shaped depressions in the stone can serve as brush supports, while at the same time suggest valleys set between three peaks of a miniature mountain landscape. Objects of this kind, combining rough, natural forms and materials with a minimal touch of human artifice, were a common adornment of the scholar's studio, where they brought the flavor of the natural landscape into the precincts of the study. These were objects for quiet contemplation and thoughtful handling, admired for qualities of color, pattern, and texture, as well as for a semisculptural shape. Characteristically, identification of the image conveyed by the Guennol stone depends upon an act of recognition by the viewer, and

its sculpturally rich and ambiguous outline evokes multiple associations—in addition to the mountain peaks, a vaguely animal-like, crouching form. Such alternate readings should not be seen as incompatible, for the Chinese valued such metamorphic richness in their landscapes and garden rockeries. The Guennol brush rest meets these standards of judgment superbly on all counts: sculpturally interesting, appealing in texture, and of relatively muted colors, lending the piece an air of well-handled antiquity. Unique among chicken-blood stones for its size and quality, this brush rest may be a very early carving.

BRUSH REST

Height, 4½ inches; length, 3⅛ inches; depth, 1 inch

China, Ming dynasty(?)

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1981.

A second piece is a cylindrical post, once intended as a seal stick. The intaglio seal has been removed and the base is now smoothly polished. The range of color from flame red to tan also includes a rich veining of ochers, gold, gray, and white.

The place of origin, date, and provenance of this specimen are not



*Chicken-blood
Seal Stone
and Tortoise
Seal Stone*

known. The seal stick has no carved inscription or other instructive markings. It can, nevertheless, be compared to similar seal stones in the Hosokawa collection, some of which have been attributed to the Ch'ien-lung reign.

SEAL STONE

Maximum width, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches; length, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

China, date unknown

Perhaps the most intriguing of the Guennol seal stones is a small square seal surmounted by a carved tortoise. The tortoise shape used in connection with seals is derived from the T'ang dynasty (618–906), when small steles were sometimes mounted on the shaped bases of tortoises. The tortoise is extremely popular in all Chinese art. Tortoises, according to Chinese mythology, live as long as 10,000 years, and so became symbols of longevity to the Chinese. The tortoise also represented the North, one of the Four Cardinal Directions, a connection from even earlier times. For this reason, tortoise decoration often adorned the gateways to the imperial cities.

The preference for archaizing style was particularly evident in objects in more modern times. An inscription by the seal carver on one side of the piece reveals him to be the artist Wang T'i (1880–1960); the date of the inscription is the first day of the cyclical year *chia-shen*, corresponding to 1944.⁵ The artist has signed his *hao* (sobriquet), "Fu-an."

TORTOISE SEAL

Inscribed by Wang T'i (1880–1960)

Height, $\frac{3}{4}$ inch; width, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch

China, dated 1944

This set of eleven chicken-blood seal stones demonstrates the wide range of sizes, shapes, and colors prized in this material. None of these has been incised with the name of an owner or carver, so specific dates cannot be assigned; it is possible that they range from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. These do not exemplify any particular style, but are typical seal stone forms of especially fine quality. Most notable among the group is a small mountain-shaped stone with an extraordinarily brilliant red hue.

R. E. V.



*Set of Eleven
Chicken-blood
Seal Stones*

SET OF ELEVEN SEAL STONES

Heights, 1½ to 3½ inches

China, dates uncertain

NOTES

1. See Sir Percival David, ed. and trans., *Chinese Connoisseurship: The "Ko Ku Yao Lun"* ["*The Essential Criteria of Antiquities*"], London, 1971, pp. 158–64.
2. Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, Cambridge, England, 1959, III.
3. Hosokawa Morisada, *Bungu*, Tokyo, 1978, p. 88.
4. Ibid., pp. 84, 86, 90, 92, 94, for various illustrated examples.
5. James C.Y. Watt, Curator of Asiatic Art, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, has kindly read the seal inscription and notes: "Wang T'i is one of the best-known twentieth-century seal carvers and was one of the founders of the famous association of seal carvers, the Hsi-ling ying-hse, located in Hangchou. He himself was from the Hangchou district."

Rock in the Form of a Mountain

Mountains have been a central theme for Far Eastern artists for nearly two millennia, and the search for miniaturized or microcosmic reflections of the grandeur of natural mountain scenery has taken many forms. The best-known expression of mountains is Chinese landscape painting, which conveys not only the physical but the moral dimensions of mountains—as symbols of such familial and social virtues as hierarchy, stability, order, and a sense of proportion. Miniaturized mountains in three-dimensional form also had a long-standing tradition in China. Miniature rock-and-tree arrangements and tray landscapes can be established as far back as the eighth century in the T'ang dynasty, and from that time onward a rich literature documents the taste for interestingly shaped stones that could be arranged to suggest a vast mountain landscape within the confined precincts of a garden.¹

Often, the painting and rockery-design traditions interacted, as with the fantastic mountain shapes of certain late Ming dynasty (early seventeenth-century) paintings and the heavily eroded, contorted shapes of Lake T'ai garden designers.² A still more common kind of interaction appeared in the studio furnishings of painters, scholars, and collectors, which often included arrestingly shaped mountain-form rocks to serve as objects of amusement, contemplation, or inspiration. The

*Rock in the
Form of a
Mountain*



Guennol rock probably belongs to this category of the treasures of the scholar's studio. An irregularly shaped boulder, small enough to fit comfortably in the palm of the hand, it suggests an impressively monumental mountain peak in miniature when viewed upright. It may also have served a more utilitarian purpose; its irregular shape and smooth surface suggest it could have been used to burnish paper in preparation for printing.

R. E. V.

ROCK IN THE FORM OF A MOUNTAIN

Maximum width, 4 inches; length, 7 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches; depth, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Date uncertain

PROVENANCE: Said to be from Japan, Sado Island.

NOTES

1. See Michael Sullivan, *Chinese Landscape Painting in the Sui and T'ang Dynasties*, Berkeley, 1980, pp. 82–87.

2. See James Cahill, "Wu Pin and His Landscape Paintings," in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Chinese Paintings*, National Palace Museum, Taipei, 1972, p. 667.

Brush Pot

The history of this refined and restrained object goes back many centuries. During the northern Sung dynasty (960–1127 A.D.), the most important and cherished implements of the scholar's desk were established by Su I-chien. The so-called Four Valuable Things were the inkstone, the ink, brushes, and paper, followed by five others: the *pi tung*, the container for the brushes; the water pot; the seals; weights for the paper; and the rest used to elevate the wrist while painting or writing. As many as twenty other objects were deemed absolutely necessary to the gentleman-scholar in China, including the rocks in his garden. Brush pots came in a range of sizes for small and large brushes, and an even larger form held handscrolls and rolls of precious paper. Nearly every precious, semiprecious, rare, and exotic material has been used to make this cherished object.

This particular brush pot, made in the Ming dynasty period in the sixteenth century, exemplifies the highest esoteric scholarly taste. The shape is severe, the surface beautifully but softly polished, the material of the finest quality wood so carefully chosen that the grain suggests



*Brush
Pot*

weird, ghostlike figures in an abstract mountain landscape. The wood is *huang-hua-li* ("yellow flower of the pear tree"), a southeast Asian redwood, *Pterocarpus indicus*, which is also referred to by some as a *dalbergia*, or of the family of *Leguminosae*. The fine color and graining were as important to the gentleman scholar who originally owned it as were the shape, texture, color, and placement of the natural, miniature landscape of mountainlike rocks in his garden.

The consideration and thought required to produce an object of such basically utilitarian purpose epitomizes the true spirit of the Ming gentleman scholar, and perhaps of the Chinese culture as a whole.

R.H.E.

BRUSH POT

Yellow rosewood

Height, $6\frac{1}{16}$ inches; diameter, $6\frac{1}{16}$ inches

China, Ming dynasty, about 1550

Agate Magatama Bead

Comma- or kidney-shaped beads frequently appear among burial objects discovered in Japan from the late Jomon period (1000–300 B.C.) through the Tumulus period (about 550 A.D.) and in royal tombs throughout southern Korea from at least the Three Kingdoms period (fourth to sixth centuries A.D.). Both countries claim to be the originators of this ornament. The earliest documented examples come from the Hosogoe site in Aomori City, Japan, and are said to date to the late Jomon period; those found as recently as 1974 at a royal tomb at Songong-ni, near Kongju, South Korea, are attributed to the first millennium B.C.¹

Whether discovered in Japanese or Korean excavations, the jewels always conform to the comma shape, but the materials selected for their manufacture range from different types of hard stones, such as jadeite, quartz, or jasper, to colored glass. Their size is not always uniform, and ordinarily they range from about one-half to one and one-half inches in length. The bead in the Guennol Collection is one of the largest examples known. It is a translucent caramel-colored agate carved in the usual comma form but with notches incised at the “head.” The surface is lightly polished, and the bead is pierced with a finely drilled hole, indicating that it was probably strung with others on a necklace.²

Necklaces appear on figural sculpture of the period, particularly the *haniwa* clay images from royal burial mounds. The *haniwa* are always either representational figures or simple cylinders. One, excavated from Unemezaka, Kamakura-shi, Kanagawa Prefecture, shows a female figure, probably a shaman, wearing a necklace with applied pendant curved beads similar to the magatama.³

In Korea, in tomb excavations throughout the south, the comma-shaped beads are incorporated on actual jewelry worn by the royal dead. In Silla and in the Paekche dynasty tomb of King Munyong from Songsan-ni in Kyongju, the beads were used widely as adornments for elaborate gold crowns, necklaces, and earrings in many styles, sometimes with gold fittings. Those from Songsan-ni are not always single beads, but sometimes are shown in back-to-back or piggyback sets.⁴ In the royal Great Tomb excavated in 1974 at Kyongju in north Kyongsang province were discovered complete crowns and evidence of jadeite comma-shaped ornaments with gold caps.⁵ Some, like the Guennol example, had grooves at one end, a feature thought to be an early variation.

The Korean and Japanese comma beads have been considered to have had magical properties, and both cultures connect them with the claws or fangs of animals. N.G. Munro translates the *maga* as “curved” and *tama* as “talon.”⁶ Others have suggested that the teeth, perhaps

*Agate
Magatama
Bead*



of carnivorous animals, found in the early Jomon tomb are the antecedents of the magatama found in the Tumulus period.⁷ It has been proposed that the Korean beads were also stone versions of animal fangs or nails, particularly those discovered at the Songong-ni site.⁸

Whatever their origins, the beads eventually came to be used as luxurious accouterments of royalty. In spite of differences in burial customs—the Japanese favored raised earth mounds, many in a unique keyhole shape, while in Korea the tombs were constructed of bricks—the ancient cultures of Japan and Korea shared these burial objects, further evidence of extensive communication between Japan and the Paekche and Silla kingdoms of Korea. The Japanese preferred the simpler type of bead, and the Koreans seem to have preferred those with gold embellishments. It is believed that this bead with its carved detail is of a type found in Izumo Prefecture, Japan, dating from the Tumulus period, when such large examples were thought to be associated with worship as well as burial.⁹

A.G.P.

AGATE MAGATAMA BEAD

Maximum width, 1½ inches; length, 2½ inches

Izumo Prefecture, Japan, Tumulus period, 4th–6th centuries A.D.

EX COLL: Shirley Day, Ltd., London.

NOTES

1. *5,000 Years of Korean Art*, National Museum of Korea, San Francisco, 1979, p. 154, no. 33 a–d.

2. See T. Kanda, *Notes on Ancient Stone Implements . . . of Japan*, Tokyo, 1884, p. 5; *Select Specimens of the Archaeological Collection*, Kyoto, 1951, p. 23; N.G. Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*, Yokohama, 1911, p. 475, pl. 358.
3. Fumiko Miki, *Haniwa: The Clay Sculpture of Protohistoric Japan*, trans. Roy Andrew Miller, Rutland, Vermont, 1958, p. 151, pl. 4. Miki notes that this figure is now in the collection of the Archaeology Seminar, Faculty of Letters, Kyoto University.
4. J.E. Kidder, *Japan Before Buddhism*, New York, 1959, p. 181, fig. 56.
5. *5,000 Years*, p. 155, nos. 34a–g, 35a–i, pl. 6, p. 152, nos. 12, 13.
6. Munro, *Prehistoric Japan*, p. 279.
7. G.J. Groot, *The Prehistory of Japan*, New York, 1951, p. 44.
8. *5,000 Years*, p. 154.
9. See Sheji Umehara (“On Bird or Animal Shaped Magatama,” *Shigaku*, XXXVIII, 1965, pp. 1 ff.), who has authenticated the Guennol magatama and suggests that it compares to a group found in Izumo Prefecture, dating to the Tumulus period.

Black Raku Tea Bowl

by Dōnyū

The tea bowl is the heart of the Japanese tea ceremony, a ritual combining aesthetic appreciation, traditional hospitality, and meditative harmony. Far more than just the principal utensil, however, the tea bowl is also the visual focus of a tea ceremony. After he has drunk his tea, the guest carefully examines the bowl, turning it over to admire the foot, sides, and interior, enjoying the bowl both tactually and visually, as his fingers, palms, and eyes explore its form, texture, weight, and color.

As the center of attention in a tea ceremony, a good tea bowl is simple and understated, but infinitely varied and interesting, in keeping with the tea ideals of *wabi* and *sabi*. *Wabi* indicates the appreciation of the patina of wear and age on simple but elegant objects made of ordinary, inexpensive materials. *Sabi* means lonely, ancient-looking, somber, and mellow. A tea bowl is the most difficult ceramic object to make well, because it must stand alone, without decorative adornment, and sustain the intense scrutiny of highly cultivated connoisseurs.

Since the sixteenth century, most of the major Japanese ceramic kilns have produced tea bowls, but Raku has remained the most distinctive and characteristic tea-ceremony ware. Kichizaemon, the present head potter of the Raku family, is the fourteenth generation in the hereditary Raku line. Chōjirō, the first of the line, was a Korean roof-tile maker living in Kyoto. His products caught the eye of Sen no Rikyū, tea master to the shōgun, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and the most influential tea master of all time. Rikyū codified the *wabicha*, or *wabi* tea

ceremony, stressing simple, somber utensils in lieu of luxurious Chinese imports favored earlier. Under Rikyū's direction, Chōjirō produced the first Raku tea bowl about 1580.

So fond did Hideyoshi become of Raku bowls that he awarded a seal to Jōkei, the second Raku potter, bearing the single ideograph *raku* ("pleasure"), which his successors have since used as the family name. Jōkei and subsequent Raku potters usually impressed such a seal on or near the base of each tea bowl (so did their many imitators). Dōnyū (also called Nonkō), to whom the present bowl is attributed, was the third generation of the Raku line.¹ Dōnyū is generally acknowledged to have made the finest Raku bowls of all.

Raku ware is a low-fired, lead-glazed earthenware. Most of the production has consisted of tea bowls, contrary to the practice of other kilns, where tea bowls usually comprised only a small percentage of a kiln's output. Raku potters also made a few incense burners and side dishes for the tea ceremony meal. There is a rare cream-colored Raku glaze used mostly on incense burners, but Raku tea bowls almost always have either a black or a red glaze. In both cases the color comes from iron oxide. The black is called *hikidashiguro* ("pulled-out black")

*Black Raku
Tea Bowl*



because the bowl is withdrawn from the kiln cherry-red hot and plunged into water.² Red Raku bowls are allowed to cool slowly in the normal way; the iron oxidizes gradually and turns from black to red.

A Raku tea bowl is nearly always cylindrical, with an inverted hemispherical base and a low foot ring, making it ideally fitted for the two hands. The sides may be higher or lower and the rim usually undulates in five gentle convex curves that conventionally suggest the five best-known mountains of China. The curve between the sides and the base is usually less abrupt; the Guennol bowl's unusual squared-off profile gives it a special sense of power and stability.³

Dōnyū's black Raku bowls usually had three or four coats of glaze on a relatively thin wall of clay. In the present example Dōnyū applied additional glaze on the upper half of the exterior in a thick, irregular, undulating layer, the so-called *maku* ("curtain") glaze for which he is well known.

R.M.

BLACK RAKU TEA BOWL
by Dōnyū

Height, 2⁷/₈ inches; diameter, 4⁵/₈ inches

Japan, Edo period, first half of the 17th century

NOTES

1. The attribution seems entirely plausible. It was written on the inside of the lid of the bowl's paulownia-wood storage box by Naotomi Kensō (also called Munemori [1725–82]), the fourth-generation tea master of the Kankyū-an school. Munemori's inscription also mentions the bowl's name. Tea bowls, tea caddies, and tea-ceremony freshwater jars were often given poetic names. This bowl's name is Garyū ("Reclining Dragon"), an apt description of its form and color. But *garyū* also means "a great man in obscurity." And it may be that Munemori, or whichever admirer named the bowl, felt that its owner had not received the credit he deserved.

2. The glaze scars from the iron blacksmith's tongs used for this purpose usually show quite clearly, as they do on the Guennol bowl.

3. Among published examples, the Dōnyū bowl closest to this one in form is in *Genshoku Nihon no Bijutsu* ["*Japanese Art in Original Color*"], 19: *Tōgei* ["*Ceramic Art*"], Tokyo, 1967, pl. 62.

Kenzan Futamono

Ogata Kenzan (1663–1743) was Japan's greatest potter. Japan is the only country in the world that considers ceramics a fine art, so Kenzan's achievement is all the more significant. This covered food container with autumn grasses design is a supreme example of the creative imagination and artistic skill for which Kenzan is famous.

Kenzan was inspired by the lacquerware of Honnami Kōetsu (1558–1637) and the paintings of Tawaraya Sōtatsu (active early seventeenth century) as well as those of his older brother, Ogata Kōrin (1658–1716). In his painted designs on ceramics, Kenzan used forms from nature, simplifying and flattening them but never destroying their sense of life, growth, and movement. With them he created bold yet harmonious designs that “wrap around” his ceramics in a remarkably modern way. Endlessly counterfeited and imitated, Kenzan was also followed by five generations of potters in a continuous hereditary line.¹ The style he created thus became a tradition that has profoundly influenced Japanese art ever since and, indirectly, Western art as well.

Kenzan grew up in a wealthy, refined environment, surrounded by literature and art and he received an ample inheritance that would have supported him comfortably the rest of his life. But in the classic manner of wealthy youth of the Edo period, he squandered his fortune on high living, fancy parties, and expensive courtesans. He then had to rely on his former hobby for a living, and became the greatest potter of his day.

Moving to Kyoto, he came under the influence of Nonomura Ninsei (about 1574–1660/66), a brilliant potter who first applied overglaze enamel decoration to earthenware.

From 1699 to 1712 Kenzan produced distinctive enameled earthenware with boldly creative designs related to the paintings of Sōtatsu and Korin as well as the lacquerware of Kōetsu. During this period he began to use Kenzan (“Dry Mountain”) as his art name. Kōrin often collaborated with his younger brother, painting the main designs on cream-colored earthenware vessels with iron oxide brown-black painting under a clear glaze. The combination gave ceramics, for the first time, the look of ink paintings and calligraphy on white paper. After 1712 Kenzan met with financial setbacks and was forced to produce more commercial ware. He died in 1743.

The Guennol box is a form of vessel called *futamono* (container with lid, whether box-shaped, as here, or bowl-shaped). *Futamono* were usually made in sets of five.² Two frequently published Kenzan *futamono* in anonymous Japanese collections have forms quite similar to that of the present example.³

The design on the Guennol *futamono* is painted in blue, green, black, white, and salmon pink under a clear glaze on buff white



Kenzan
Futamono

earthenware. The subject is autumn grasses and the moon (the latter repeated several times throughout the design). A frequent subject of screen paintings, lacquer, and textiles, this theme is called Musashino ("Musashi Plain"). It refers to the full autumn moon above the marshlands at Musashi, north of modern Tokyo, as celebrated in Japanese literature since early times. Autumn, when the air is clear, is the ideal season for the traditional Japanese pastime of moon viewing. But autumn's beauty is always touched with sadness (*mono no aware*, "the beautiful sadness of things"), as living things approach the harsh winter season.

Musashi Plain was also the site of a well-known ancient battle. Reeds grow thick over the bones of fallen warriors while wolves browse for tidbits. In the Edo period a courtesan often fled to Musashi Plain with her lover, usually a young clerk who could never afford to pay off the girl's indenture. The couple hid in the tall grass and committed double suicide when the authorities closed in.

The interior of the present *futamono*, both lower section and lid, is decorated with designs of distant hills and clouds painted in underglaze cobalt blue. The exterior bottom bears the artist's unmistakably bold two-character signature, "Kenzan," written in underglaze iron brown.

R.M.

KENZAN FUTAMONO

Glazed earthenware

Height, with lid, 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches; width, 5 $\frac{5}{8}$ inches

Japan, Edo period, first half of the 18th century

NOTES

1. Bernard Leach (1887–1979), the great English potter, is affectionately known in Japan as “Kenzan VII” because one of his teachers was the sixth, and last, Kenzan.

2. Another from this same set of five (part of an original set of ten) is in The Brooklyn Museum, New York, acc. no. 80.10.

3. Mashiko Sato, *Arts of Japan 2: Kyoto Ceramics*, New York and Tokyo, 1973, pl. 98; Tadanari Mitsuoka, *Tōki Taikai 24: Kenzan* [“Outline of Ceramics 24: Kenzan”], Tokyo, 1973, pl. 26.

Ivory Swallow Netsuke by Masanao

The Edo period (1615–1868) was a glorious age of crafts and design in Japan. Personal belongings received the same attention as the traditional religious and court arts, and were selected as much for their decoration and form as for their function. The object here is a miniature sculpture of a swallow intended to be a toggle suspended from the *obi*, or “sash,” of the wearer’s kimono. It is carved from lustrous ivory and polished, and is signed by the great master of the Kyoto School of netsuke carvers, Masanao of Kyoto.

Masanao was one of only three netsuke carvers from Kyoto to be mentioned in the *Soken Kisho*, an anthology of contemporary works of art published in 1781 by Inaba Michitatsu of Osaka. It included sections on netsuke, lacquerwork, and other arts not then as highly regarded as painting, ceramics, and sculpture. It provided background about fifty-seven carvers who were known to be working at the time throughout Japan. Now many of these artists are known through their signed works, but tests of authenticity are difficult since so little is known about the artists and their styles.¹ Those included in the lists, however, have been unusually prominent in their field.

The Kyoto School was noted for boldly modeled human and animal figures carved in good-quality ivory and for signatures strongly engraved in a rounded reserve.² Masanao of Kyoto primarily produced lifelike animals; his extraordinary skill in carving and technique gave

his work a unique style not easily reproduced. His figures have slightly exaggerated features, such as large ears and protruding chests or shoulders, which lend strength and power to the images, frequently shown seated or reclining. His animals are usually carved in ivory and have inlaid eyes, often slit in each corner (a detail omitted here). The two cord holes in Masanao's netsuke are always a large oval-shaped and a small round one. His distinctive *go*, or professional signature, is always well spaced in an elliptical reserve: in some images, it is in bold, thick, simply conceived characters;³ in others the characters incline toward the right,⁴ like the signature engraved on the Guennol swallow.

Although the stylized swallow (*susume*) is the Masanao subject most often imitated, the Guennol ivory is clearly an original. The swallow is seated with its tail erect and its wings outspread. The plumage is depicted only on the wings and tail, where it is etched in dark brown. The eyes are inlaid with dark brown or black polished shell. The surface is polished to highlight the beautiful spiral-shaped natural grain of the ivory, which may be sperm-whale tusk. It is inscribed on the base beside two etched claws, with the two-character signature, "Masanao," carved within an oval cartouche.



*Ivory
Swallow
Netsuke*

The authenticity of the Guennol swallow netsuke is strengthened further when compared with a Masanao swallow from the authoritative M.T. Hindson Collection. The Hindson swallow in many ways does not display the same technical panache.⁵ The carved and etched plumage of the wings often shows lines going through two or three feathers, and it does not have a double line denoting the round eye. In the Guennol carving each feather is meticulously depicted, and these details enhance the simple, bold shape of the bird. Neil K. Davey has noted that the signature on the Hindson netsuke is unconvincing, and the carving itself is not as skillful as on the Guennol netsuke.

A.G.P.

IVORY SWALLOW NETSUKES by Masanao

Maximum height, $\frac{3}{4}$ inches; maximum width, $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches; length, about $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches
Japan, Edo period, mid-18th century

NOTES

1. Neil K. Davey, *Netsuke, A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection*, New York, 1974, pp. 5–6.
2. Ibid., p. 8.
3. Marie-Thérèse Coullery, *The Baur Collection, Geneva: Netsuke*, Geneva, 1977, nos. c248, c1163, c1171, c1179.
4. Davey, *Netsuke, A Comprehensive Study*, p. 62.
5. Ibid., p. 64, no. 153.

Rhinoceros-horn Netsuke

The western seaboard region of Japan, now present-day Shimane province, provided horn and many varieties of wood ideal for carving, but little ivory, so the netsuke of the Iwami School of that region are of whale bone or wild boar tusk. Artists of this school are noted for their meticulous work, chiefly in subjects taken from nature, and their netsuke are distinguished by skillfully carved minute inscriptions.¹

The Iwami School is obscure and was virtually unknown at the time of the *Soken Kisho*, the arts anthology published in 1781. Only seventy Iwami School netsuke, including this one, are recorded by Anne Hull Grundy, the foremost Iwami School netsuke collector in the West and author of the only definitive study of the school.²



*Rhinoceros-horn
Netsuke*

The Guennol netsuke depicts a mountain, with the diminutive figure of a Chinese gentleman, who sits below a pinetree that grows from an overhanging cliff, and gazes to his right at a waterfall. It is exquisitely conceived, with the figure applied in ivory and the waterfall in mother-of-pearl that contrasts with the rugged shape of the mountain and the dark color of the horn. Both figure and waterfall are executed with abbreviated, abstract, yet evocative forms. For all its adornments, the piece is appealingly simple.

The figure probably represents the legendary T'ang poet Li Po (701–762 A.D.). A celebrated hermit, he is associated with a waterfall at Lu-shan (Mount Lu) in Kiangsu province. An oft-quoted phrase from one of his poems on the magnificent waterfall reads, “dropping like the Milky Way, falling from the vast sky.”³ The subject of poet and waterfall became widely used in both Chinese and Japanese art, particularly in the professional and court ink paintings of the Ming dynasty rulers and their Japanese contemporaries during the Muromachi era, as well as in carvings in jade and other hard stones.

The netsuke is signed at the side of the mountain, “Toka Sanjin hachi ju ichi o” (“Toka Sanjin [or, the Hermit of the Peachbloom Mountain] at the age of eighty-one”). It is also inscribed on the base with a date: “Minami no saikaku, o motte saku kore, mizuno e shun jitsu” (“Made this piece with rhinoceros horn from the South, on a spring day in the Monkey Year”). The zodiacal date can be interpreted as either 1752 or 1812.⁴

Unfortunately, there is no reliable documentary evidence on the artist Toka Sanjin or a netsuke carver who took the name as a pseudonym. The exquisite expression and high degree of skill in executing this piece clearly assign it to the Iwami School, although it cannot be specifically linked to a particular artist. Several early artists of the Iwami School, however, including its founder, Tomiharu Seiyodo (about 1745–1810), continued to carve netsuke into their old age, and gave their years in inscriptions. Tomiharu, for example, died at the age of seventy-seven. The eighteenth-century Iwami School artists worked in a much simpler style and were not known to have used the syncretic technique shown in the Guennol “Li Po” netsuke.⁵

A.G.P.

RHINOCEROS-HORN NETSUKES

Li Po Gazing at the Waterfall

Signed Toka Sanjin

Inlaid with ivory and mother-of-pearl

Height, 1 $\frac{5}{16}$ inches; width, 1 $\frac{11}{16}$ inches

Japan, Iwami School, Edo period, late 17th–early 18th centuries

EX COLL.: Anne Hull Grundy Collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Anne Hull Grundy, “Netsuke Carvers of the Iwami School,” *Ars Orientalis*, IV, 1961, pp. 329–56, pl. 16, figs. 104–6; *Eighteenth to Twentieth Century Netsuke*, Eskenazi, London, 1978, no. 44.

NOTES

1. Neil K. Davey, *Netsuke, A Comprehensive Study Based on the M.T. Hindson Collection*, New York, 1974, p. 6.
2. Anne Hull Grundy, “Netsuke Carvers of the Iwami School,” *Ars Orientalis*, IV, 1961, pp. 329–56.
3. Shigeyoshi Obata, *The Works of Li Po*, New York, 1928, p. 133.
4. Grundy, “Netsuke Carvers,” p. 350.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 330 ff.

Pre-Columbian Art

MARY ANN DURGIN

WITH

FREDERICK J. DOCKSTADER

Pre-Columbian Art

*"I will give you some very valuable stones, which you will send to him [Charles V] in my name; they are chalchihuitls and are not to be given to anyone but to him, your great Prince. Each stone is worth two loads of gold."*¹

So Montezuma instructed Cortés. *Chalchihuitls* were the green stones prized by the Aztecs, their neighbors, and their ancestors, above all other gems. Michael D. Coe, recounting reports of the day, speaks of burial preparations for Central Mexican worthies just prior to the Conquest during which such stones were placed in their mouths to symbolize their hearts. Even a commoner's corpse was not left unrecognized in this regard, and often a bead would be placed in the mouth of an average Maya of the Yucatan, for example, to serve as "money" for his journey beyond.²

What the ancients called *chalchihuitl*, what we know as jade, received its present name from the Spaniards. They dubbed this sensuous substance *piedra de ijada*, or "loinstone," for it was believed that the newly encountered mineral was efficacious in curing ailments of the kidneys and loins. New World jade reached Europe a century before the arrival of its counterpart from China.³

Although most of the Guennol pre-Columbian art is of jade, there are objects of the period in a diversity of mediums. Only a collection as superb as this can perpetuate—well into the twentieth century—the three-millennia-long American tradition of awe, delight, and respect for one of our most treasured inheritances—the link to our spiritual, if not to our genetic, ancestors.

Most of the ancient objects from Middle America in the Guennol Collection come from three cultures: the Olmec (1200–600 B.C.), the Izapa (300 B.C.–A.D. 250), and the Maya (A.D. 300–900).

The Olmec world derived its character from the land. Although by its apogee (1200–600 B.C.) Olmec society had probably compartmentalized into specialized spheres of artisans, traders, warriors, religious proselytizers,

and lawgivers, among others, the land was still its armature. It was from the land—from nature, and from the creatures that populate it—that the Olmec religion evolved. The religion concerned itself with the cycle of the seasons and with concepts of death and rebirth—necessary to fructify the land.

Some investigators have used a speculative tool known as ethnographic analogy to delineate the Olmec religious system.⁴ Ethnographic analogy is a process of working backward from history to prehistory, on the assumption that no cataclysmic events interrupted the continuum. Using this method Peter David Joralemon believes that he has isolated the six major gods of the Olmec people.⁵ Their representations—biologically impossible—are culled from a wide variety of creatures. His God I, for example, known as the dragon, combines at various times characteristics of the cayman, eagle, jaguar, human, and serpent, and has associations with the earth, agricultural fertility, water, fire, and kingship. As Elizabeth P. Benson has suggested, Olmec motifs are flexible combinations of elements.⁶ Hence it is not surprising that objects in a single category do not totally correspond to one another.

By coincidence the Guennol Collection contains representations of a cultural link between two great civilizations, the Olmec and the Maya, known as Izapa. The Guennol “connection” is in the form of six sensuous little fish: five all alike, fashioned from the shell of a freshwater mussel, and the sixth from a piece of rich, translucent green jade. The type site of Izapa, from which the culture derives its name, is on the sultry, fertile Pacific coastal plain of Mexico’s state of Chiapas. The area is quite large, with artificial mounds, monuments, ball courts, and plazas. The dating of Izapan objects falls within the range of 300 B.C. to 250 A.D., although in comparison to other cultures, little is known about the Izapan.

The Maya were exuberant in their love of jade, and the Guennol Collection gives an overview of the subjects treated by the Maya lapidary. Adrian Digby illustrates a well-togged personage from Stela I at Ixkun, Guatemala, and outlines the artifacts thought to be of jade manufacture.⁷ The Maya adorned themselves with jade from headdress to ankle: they attached beads to the feathers appended to their headdresses and various and sundry ornaments to the bodies of the headdresses; they wore ear decorations, face pendants attached to collars and waistbands, tubular beaded wristlets and anklets, and tubular beaded additions to their loincloths. By Maya times, certain types of jade were becoming scarce, particularly the blue favored at La Venta, a well-known Olmec site. The Maya could no longer afford the Olmec luxury of adapting material to form, and had to settle for the opposite approach. The edges of pendants were no longer rounded off—every chip that could possibly be retained was kept intact.

“That we come to earth to live is untrue. We come to sleep, to dream,” an anonymous Aztec poet wrote.⁸ The Guennol Collection is the bearer of the dreams and of the myths of many peoples of the past—myths whose words have long since been lost. This is perhaps the most challenging aspect of the collection for the present-day viewer, since we seem so uneasy with

fantasy. Ours is a culture without a unifying myth. John Dewey once said that one must be interested in order to understand. Surely the pleasurable visceral response that the Guennol pieces evoke in us produces such an interest. Perhaps the greatest dignity of this collection arises from its ability to illuminate what it is—and what it was—to be human.

M.A.D.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Kennedy Easby, *Pre-Columbian Jade from Costa Rica*, New York, 1968, p. 8.
2. Michael D. Coe, *The Maya Scribe and His World*, New York, 1973, pp. 11–12.
3. For a discussion of the composition and technology of pre-Columbian jade, see Gordon F. Ekholm and Samuel K. Lothrop, "Pre-Columbian Objects," in *The Guennol Collection*, I, ed. Ida Ely Rubin, pp. 306–310.
4. Michael D. Coe, *America's First Civilization*, New York, 1968; Peter T. Furst, "The Olmec Were-Jaguar Motif in the Light of Ethnographic Reality," in *The Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson, Washington, D.C., 1968, pp. 143–74; Peter David Joralemon, *A Study of Olmec Iconography*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, no. 7, Washington, D.C., 1971; Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Iconography," in *The Origins of Religious Art and Iconography in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica*, ed. H. B. Nicholson, Los Angeles, 1976, pp. 27–71.
5. Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon," pp. 27–71.
6. Elizabeth P. Benson, *An Olmec Figure at Dumbarton Oaks*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, no. 8, Washington, D.C., 1971, pp. 34–35.
7. Adrian Digby, *Maya Jades*, London, 1972, p. 8.
8. In Joseph Campbell, *The Mythic Image*, Princeton, 1974, chap. I, p. 1.

Jade Iguana

Fashioned from a portion of opaque, mottled blue jade, the “iguana’s” legs are hunched in a crouching position. The head is upraised, and the downturned U-shaped mouth as well as the snout are clearly delineated. Its finely incised, inverted L-shaped eyes are combined with flame eyebrows, in high relief. The tail terminates in a cleft.

Peter David Joralemon has chosen the Guennol “iguana” as a primary example of his God I, the most important Olmec deity.¹ He categorized it with monuments from the two best-known Olmec sites: 6, 19, and 63 from La Venta and San Lorenzo Monument 47. A primary image of the god is painted (1-c) on the walls of a cave in the still-wild state of Guerrero (Oxtotitlan) and incised on the rocks (Relief V) of Chalcatzingo, Morelos. It is also fashioned in clay on what has become known as the Atlahuayan figure, also from Morelos, and into a figure from Tlapacoya, both in the collection of the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City.

Joralemon theorizes that the downturned U-shaped mouth of God I represents a cave² and recalls David Grove’s notion that it might portray the entrance to the Olmec underworld.³ Its flame eyebrows suggest fire associations and, according to Elizabeth P. Benson, the Olmec cleft might be an “outlining of power.”⁴

Although only four and three-quarter inches in length, the Guennol “iguana” achieves a sculptural monumentality and conveys in shorthand important elements of the Olmec world view.

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*Jade
Iguana*



JADE IGUANA

Length, 4¾ inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Iconography," in *The Origins of Religious Art and Iconography in Pre Classic Mesoamerica*, ed. H.B. Nicholson, Los Angeles, 1976, fig. 9d.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 78; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1948.

NOTES

1. Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Iconography," *The Origins of Religious Art and Iconography in Pre Classic Mesoamerica*, ed. H.B. Nicholson, Los Angeles, 1976, fig. 9d.

2. Ibid., pp. 37, 40.

3. David C. Grove, *The Olmec Paintings of Oxtotitlan Cave, Guerrero, Mexico*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, 6, Washington, D.C., 1970, pp. 11, 32.

4. Elizabeth P. Benson, *An Olmec Figure at Dumbarton Oaks*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, 8, Washington, D.C., 1971, p. 28.

Jade Burden Bearer

With knees bent and hands thrust backward, this little opaque blue-green jade figure with white striations steadies the handles of its "burden" pouch. The handle extends across the forehead in a manner that is still prevalent in the Guatemalan highlands today. On the forehead the handle becomes an embossed headband reminiscent of the one worn by the little god supported by a "priest" in volume I of the Guennol Collection.¹ Its face is typically Olmec—almond-shaped eyes, a nose both wide and flattened, and a mouth consisting of an upturned upper lip and depressed corners. Its head flattens backward into a cleft. Both its pectoral and belt "buckle" are dominated by a Saint Andrew's cross, which Peter David Joralemon has demonstrated is fairly common to Olmec iconography.² A three-dimensional cleft, drilled horizontally, emerges from the pouch—perhaps a schematicized metaphor for a were-jaguar, or a more generalized statement of power.³ The pouch is finely incised with concentric diamond, U, and two rows of leaflike elements. The combination of cleft, "burden," embossed headband—here with naturalistically fashioned ears rather than with



*Jade Burden Bearer:
front and side views*

the usual serrated flanges—pectoral, and “belt buckle” with a Saint Andrew’s cross suggest God IV, the Rain God with were-jaguar connotations.⁴

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JADE BURDEN BEARER

Height, 3 $\frac{5}{16}$ inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

EXHIBITED: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1982.

NOTES

1. *The Guennol Collection*, I, ed. Ida Ely Rubin, New York, 1975, ill. pp. 307–8.
2. Peter David Joralemon, *A Study of Olmec Iconography*, Studies in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology, 7, Washington, D.C., 1971.
3. Peter T. Furst disagrees: “However it may vary in some details from example to example, the cleft-headed, toothless ‘were-jaguar baby-face’ reveals itself to be unique only in style. In content and meaning it fits completely into the framework of Mesoamerican cosmological structure, and, in a sense, represents its very core. Neither ‘rain god,’ ‘maize god,’ or ‘dragon,’ symbolic analysis and natural history in combination show it to be nothing other than the earliest recognizable ancestor of Tlaltecuhltli, the fundamental Mesoamerican Earth Mother Goddess (the Aztec ‘Heart of the Earth’) in her animal manifestation as jaguar-toad” (“Jaguar Baby or Toad Mother: A New Look at an Old Problem in Olmec Iconography,” in *The Olmec and Their Neighbors*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson, Washington, D.C., 1981, p. 149).
4. Joralemon, *Study of Olmec Iconography*, 1971, nos. 99–104.

Two Jade Spoons

The first jade “spoon” is a splendid variation on the God I theme—a wonderfully translucent object of amazing thinness, carved of blue jade without aid of metal tools. It is thought that the spoon might have been used as an implement for the ingestion of hallucinogens—a pan-native American practice to achieve religious transcendence.¹ A typically Olmec profile, itself topped by the upper portion of a cleft face and backed by what appears to be the lower portion of yet another face, is set inside a profile rendering of God I, whose flame eyebrows rise from the top of his head with what has been termed the “hand-paw-wing” motif suspended from the back of the head. Three jaguar pelage markings are scattered about the surface of the spoon. The incisions are probably filled in with hematite.²

Joralemon suggests that the Guennol spoon might have analogies to the Atlhuayan figure mentioned in the jade iguana essay above; Mural 1 from Oxtotitlan cave, Guerrero; Painting 7, also from the same cave; and Monument 47 from the site of San Lorenzo.³

Jade spoons do not function solely as the bearers of the iconography of God I. Elizabeth Kennedy Easby, for example, illustrates a jade spoon from Costa Rica⁴ that Joralemon claims for his God III, the Olmec Bird Monster and complement of God I.⁵ And there are spoons bereft of iconography, such as the second jade spoon in the Guennol Collection, which is carved from an opaque stone. That such spoons are known from as far south as Costa Rica is further supported by Carlos Balser.⁶

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Jade Spoon

TWO JADE SPOONS

JADE SPOON

Length, 4¾ inches

Olmec; Vera Cruz, Mexico, 1200–600 B.C.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Art and Iconography," in *The Origins of Religious Art and Iconographies in Pre Classic Mesoamerica*, ed. H.B. Nicholson, Los Angeles, 1976, fig. 14h.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1973.

JADE SPOON

Length, 4⅞ inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

NOTES

1. Peter T. Furst says, "I have long thought that Olmec jade 'spoons' might be stylized birds, but . . . the possibility of the jade spoons as receptacles for psychotomimetic snuff had not occurred to me. This is speculative since we do not know whether the Olmec shamans used snuff or other narcotics; however, in view of the great antiquity of snuffing and the widespread use of psychotropic plants in South and Central America, as well as in Mexico, it would be surprising if they did not" ("The Olmec Were-Jaguar Motif in the Light of Ethnographic Reality," in *The Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson, Washington, D.C., 1968, p. 162).

2. Furst notes, "The jaguar is in fact a man. . . . The Jaguar, however, is equivalent only to one category of men who alone possess supernatural powers: the shamans. Moreover, shamans and jaguars are not merely equivalent, but each is at the same time the other." And, finally, ". . . the feline characteristics become a kind of badge of office, the manifestations of the supernatural jaguar qualities inherent in priest or shaman, his spiritual bond and identity with the jaguar, and his capacity, unique



Jade Spoon

among men, of crossing the boundary between animals and humankind by achieving total spiritual transformation" ("The Olmec Were-Jaguar Motif," pp. 148, 170).

3. Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Iconography," in *The Origins of Religious Art and Iconography in Pre Classic Mesoamerica*, ed. H.B. Nicholson, Los Angeles, 1976, p 47.

4. Elizabeth Kennedy Easby, *Pre-Columbian Jade from Costa Rica*, New York, 1968, pl. 64.

5. Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon," p. 33 and fig. 20*h*.

6. Carlos Balser, *El Jade de Costa Rica*, San Jose, 1974, pl. viii.

Felsite Jaguar

The jaguar appears again in the form of a rather engaging little creature of felsite only two and one-quarter inches in height. He sports a delightfully bushy tail and a "Mickey Mouse cap" with ears. The face is typically Olmec and the paws hunched.

Why is the jaguar so ubiquitous in the Olmec culture? According to Peter T. Furst, the shaman or sorcerer is synonymous with the jaguar; in fact, one is merely an aspect of the other.¹ Both aspects possess supernatural power and function as agents of good and evil,



*Felsite Jaguar:
front and
back views*

exercising social control upon the community. An eroded basalt Olmec sculpture in The Brooklyn Museum, New York, shows the skin of a were-jaguar literally being peeled away from the scalp in the act of transformation from one aspect to the other.² This religious context relates the jaguar to the “spoons,” since the hallucinogens supposedly ingested from the spoons bring out the jaguar already inherent within the shaman.

The Guennol Collection demonstrates the great range of Olmec jaguar representations—from the fairly realistic carving here to the schematic jaguar pelage markings of the spoons.

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FELSITE JAGUAR

Height, 2¼ inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Hasso von Winning, *Pre-Columbian Art of Mexico and Central America*, 1968, pp. 27, 54, pl. 46; Elizabeth Kennedy Easby and John F. Scott, *Before Cortés: The Sculpture of Middle America*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1970, no. 44.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 81; *Before Cortés: Sculpture of Middle America*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 30, 1970–January 3, 1971, no. 44.

NOTES

1. Peter T. Furst, "The Olmec Were-Jaguar Motif in the Light of Ethnographic Reality," in *The Dumbarton Oaks Conference on the Olmec*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson, Washington, D.C., 1968, pp. 143–78.
2. Peter David Joralemon, personal communication.

Jade Ears

An especially intriguing pair of objects in the Guennol Collection is the ears naturalistically fashioned from the opaque blue-gray jade that was so pervasive among La Venta blade-shaped objects known as celts. On each ear a hole is drilled through the earlobe and the forward edge of the ear is flat, with a vertical row of four drilled holes—the second from the bottom piercing the area leading to the auditory meatus on the front. Although catalogued as a pair of earrings, it seems more likely that they covered human ears as part of a lord's funerary regalia. A prime concern of the Olmec was to provide the body after death with the same treasures that were enjoyed in life. This is supported



Jade Ears

by the sumptuous array of jade—now on view at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico City—that was found with the remains of Pacal, the seventh-century ruler of the most beautiful of all Maya sites, Palenque. A mirror image of the Guennol left ear, more than likely crafted by the same hand, is in The Art Museum at Princeton University.

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JADE EARS

Height, 2¼ inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1977.

Jade Corn Symbol

Olmec representations range from realistic sculptural renditions, such as the ears, to brief notation, like the three pelage markings that indicate jaguar skin, on the first Guennol spoon. Peter David Joralemon, however, does note a predominant tendency toward abbreviation, and the opaque blue jade corn symbol is further proof of his thesis.¹ It is one half of a corn motif roughly triangular in form, with a hemispherical depression at the center—perhaps for some now lost inclusion. The piece was not intended to be worn, as there are no drilled holes. Since corn, or maize, was—and still is—a staple of the Middle American diet, it is no wonder that an ancient carver fashioned a likeness of it from jade, his most precious material.

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JADE CORN SYMBOL

Height, 3 inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1973.

NOTE

1. Peter David Joralemon, "The Olmec Dragon: A Study in Pre-Columbian Iconography," in *The Origins of Religious Art and Iconography in Pre Classic Mesoamerica*, ed. H.B. Nicholson, Los Angeles, 1976, p. 37.



*Jade
Corn
Symbol*

Olmec Jade Celt

On one side of this opaque celt, or blade form, is an Olmec profile, defined by finely incised white lines; on the reverse, in much more pronounced relief, is a schematically rendered bird with a more-or-less triangular beak that appears to dip deeply into its gently curving breast and wings. A portion of this facet of the carving winds itself around to the other side, where circular excisions were also added, and the head rises to a crest. The treatment of the bird is quite typical of Costa Rican lapidary themes.

This celt focuses on an interesting aspect of the pre-Columbian world—the ancients, too, were heirloom hoarders, a practice that has



*Olmec Jade Celt:
front and
back views*

compounded the problem of dating. In proportion to the corpus of extant Olmec portables, few have been found through controlled archaeological excavation; even when articles are systematically recovered from a dated site, they may have been made elsewhere and subsequently transported to the site. Hence the dating of "classic" Olmec portables is general (1200–600 B.C.) and determined on stylistic grounds.

Judging from the markedly different carving styles on the Guennol piece, Costa Ricans reworked not only their own jade but also that of others. Although the Costa Ricans, like the Olmec, were prodigious jade carvers, Costa Rica was probably not a source of jade either for its own production or for export. The earliest Costa Rican jade artifacts excavated under scientific conditions have been dated to the latter part of Period IV (about 1,500 A.D.)—well after the demise of the Olmec culture. If Costa Rican lapidary work is not directly connected with that of the Olmec, it certainly has indirect links, as evidenced by the two Olmec artifacts from the Guennol Collection found there.²

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OLMEC JADE CELT

Height, 8 inches

Olmec; 1200–600 B.C.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Kennedy Easby has not altogether abandoned this idea. (See "Jade," in *Between Continents/Between Seas: Pre-Columbian Art of Costa Rica*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson, New York, 1981, p. 138).

2. Gordon F. Ekholm and Samuel K. Lothrop, "Two Olmec Winged Deities," in *The Guennol Collection*, I, ed. Ida Ely Rubin, New York, 1975, pp. 320–24.

Five Fish Made of Freshwater Mussel Shell

The five small fish, fashioned from the shell of the freshwater mussel native to the waters of West Mexico,¹ testify to the important relationship between the fish and the dragon or serpent in Izapan iconography. Their ring elements, U elements, whiskers, aveolar mouths, bulbous noses, and eyes are closely associated with the dragon found

*Five Fish
Made of
Freshwater
Mussel Shell*



on Stelae 5, 22, and 67 from the Izapan heartland and on Stela 3 from the site of Kaminalyuyú outside of Guatemala City.

Although the elements of the fish are expanded or contracted to conform to the outlines of the material, they generally correspond in outline and detail. The fine drill holes through the mouths suggest that the fish were suspended from a necklace or perhaps sewn onto an article of clothing. The red color that fills the incisions more than likely is hematite. The fish probably date from early in the Izapan period (300–150 B.C.)²

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FIVE FISH MADE OF FRESHWATER MUSSEL SHELL

Height, each, about ½ inch

Izapa, Mexico; 300–150 B.C.

NOTES

1. William E. Emmerson, personal communication.
2. Clara Lipson, personal communication.

Jade Fish

This jade fish represents the culmination of Izapan expertise. It is drilled with no less than ten holes, not all of them intended for a functional purpose. It sports a bifurcated tail, the Izapan double-scroll earplug and scroll-like eyes. The “pompadour” brow is reminiscent of those on the Chiapa de Corzo incised bones. However, it is the truncated T—much like the Mayan IK, or wind sign—that secures the dating, since the element occurs only in Protoclassic times (about 100 B.C.–250 A.D.) on El Baul Stela I in Guatemala.¹ As with the five fish made of mussel shell, the incisions here are defined by red color inlaid in the jade.

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JADE FISH

Height, 1½ inches

Izapa, Mexico; 150 B.C.–250 A.D.

NOTES

1. Clara Lipson, personal communication.



*Jade
Fish*

Jade Turkey-head Pendant

The turkey head with beady coffee-bean eyes, furrowed brow, and pugnacious beak is a rare carving that is at once naturalistic and volumetric. The upraised drill hole on the beak accentuates both qualities.

When the Spaniards came to Tenochtitlán, the capital city of the Aztecs—today Mexico City—they found the earthly paradise of Montezuma, who was, in fact, considered semidivine. Each day a sumptuous array of food was laid out for his choosing, which he consumed shielded from the scrutiny of his audience. Among the delicacies offered was turkey simmered in spices. Not even a dish fit for a king, however, is

*Jade
Turkey-head
Pendant*



sufficient explanation for the rendering of its main ingredient in jade. The Dresden Codex (of about the twelfth century A.D.), one of the three or four surviving Maya books that eventually found their way into the library of the Elector of Saxony sometime after the Conquest, presents the turkey in a variety of contexts: as sacrificial offering, as the figure in an almanac, and as a deity, as well as in hunting and trapping scenes.

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JADE TURKEY-HEAD PENDANT

Height, 2½ inches

Maya; Early Classic period, 400–700 A.D.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 91.

Jade Pendant

Another object with sacred associations is the Guennol opaque pale green jade pendant, which has apple green coloring and brown specks. It is pierced by unusually wide drill holes that extend from side to side above the body of the figure. The figure is male and wears an earspool, necklace, wristlet, anklets, and a waistband, all of which would probably be of jade if actual objects. In his upraised left hand is a torch that recalls one in the Dresden Codex associated with a descending fire dog, and around his upraised legs are circular and curlicue elements—reminiscent of those that appear on a pendant from the Squier Collection, Toniná, Chiapas, dated to the Late Classic period (600–900 A.D.).¹ (The Guennol jade, now on view at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, has been dated by the Museum to the fifth to sixth centuries A.D., the Early Classic period).

It is unclear whether the Guennol pendant should be read vertically or horizontally. (Although the drill holes run along the horizontal, this lengthwise perforation is a diagnostic of Early Classic jades, even for those meant to be viewed vertically. If read vertically, the pendant would recall those descending Maya gods from, for example, Structure 5 of the site of Tulum in the Mexican state of Quintana Roo, known as

*Jade
Pendant*



the Temple of the Descending God. If, however, the pendant is to be read horizontally, it brings to mind the elaborately decked-out floating deities on a Protoclassic stone bowl.²

M.A.D.

JADE PENDANT

Length, 3¾ inches

Maya; Early Classic period, 400–600 A.D.

EXHIBITED: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1982.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth Kennedy Easby, "The Squier Jades from Toniná, Chiapas," in *Essays in Pre-Columbian Art and Archaeology*, Cambridge, Mass., 1964, fig. 2a.
2. Michael D. Coe, *The Maya Scribe and His World*, New York, 1973, no. 3.

Maya Jade Celt

The pale green jade celt in the Guennol Collection is incised with the profile of a cross-legged, nefarious-looking character seated on a glyph with a diamond-shaped element at the center. (Such diamond-shaped or star elements trace their ancestry back to Olmec times, when they were generally used on terra-cotta objects.) The “character” wears a beaded waistband, a “jester’s” cap—the source of his name, the



*Maya
Jade Celt*

Jester God—and has an especially prominent nose. Incised above the cap is a vertical row of circles, “ones” in the Maya numerical system. In the center of the cap is a representation of an inlaid concave mirror of iron ore.

The Jester God is quite similar to another god of the Maya pantheon known as God K, and the two may be one and the same. Both wear mirrors affixed to their caps, and according to John B. Carlson, “they function as a pair as probable gods of rulership or lineal succession to office. The mirror is then a graphic symbol of their function.”¹ The Jester God appears in at least eight variations at the Maya site of Palenque,² where God K, already a distinct part of Maya mythology, was proclaimed the main divine rulership symbol, an idea that was apparently rapidly accepted throughout most of the Maya world.³ Not only does the Guennol celt bear the main divine rulership symbol, but the element beneath the Jester supports the theory that this god symbolizes a star.⁴

M.A.D.

MAYA JADE CELT

Height, 4 inches

Maya; Early Classic period, 400–700 A.D.

NOTES

1. John B. Carlson, “Olmec Concave Iron-Ore Mirrors,” in *The Olmec and Their Neighbors*, ed. Elizabeth P. Benson, Washington, D.C., 1981, p. 128.

2. Linda Schele, “Observations on the Cross Motif at Palenque,” in *The Art, Iconography and Dynastic History of Palenque*, I, ed. Merle Greene Robertson, Pebble Beach, California, 1974, p. 50, fig. 10.

3. Merle Greene Robertson and Marjorie S. Rosenblum Scandizzo, M.D., and John R. Scandizzo, M.D., “Physical Deformities in the Ruling Lineage of Palenque and the Dynastic Implications” in *The Art, Iconography and Dynastic History of Palenque*, III, ed. Merle Greene Robertson, Pebble Beach, California, 1976, pp. 78–79.

4. Ibid., p. 82.

Jade Plaques

Perhaps the most beautiful Maya jade in the Guennol Collection is this plaque of brilliant green depicting a seated dignitary. It is bisected by a streak of brown that runs from the right arm of the figure through the stomach and the left hand. He sits cross-legged—possibly an indication of high rank¹—his head in profile facing to the right and his body rendered frontally. His left hand rests on his left knee and the right arm is upraised with the hand in a stylized position. The dignitary

wears a headdress composed of what appear to be both zoöomorphic and anthropomorphic elements, a tripartite ear ornament and a necklace, wristlet, and anklets. Although the outline of the plaque has the typical Maya unevenness, the figure is set in what has become known as a “picture frame,” typical of the jades excavated at the site of Nebaj, Guatemala.² Almost flush with his face, in this case facing toward the figure’s left in a cartouche, is a small anthropomorphic profile—perhaps a glyph. The jade was meant to be worn.

A variation on the theme of this last plaque is the opaque jade one—also meant to be worn—with a dignitary standing facing front with his head in profile facing left. The left hand defines a stylized gesture, and the right rests on a waistband to which is appended, on the left side, a pendant with a human head like the Guennol jade mosaic head pendant. The present worthy, who stands on a platform dominated by a monster head, wears a zoöomorphic headdress, ear ornaments, wristlets and anklets, and a loincloth decorated with a geometric pattern—the standard form of the serpent apron, a metaphor for royalty.³

M.A.D.



*Jade
Plaque*

*Jade
Plaque*



JADE PLAQUE

Height, 2½ inches

Maya; Early Classic period, 400–700 A.D.

EXHIBITED: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, since 1982.

JADE PLAQUE

Height, 3⅛ inches

Maya; Early Classic period, 400–700 A.D.

NOTES

1. Elizabeth P. Benson, "Gestures and Offerings" in *The Art, Iconography and Dynastic History of Palenque*, I, ed. Merle Greene Robertson, Pebble Beach, California, 1974, p. 111.
2. Alfred V. Kidder and A.L. Smith, *Excavations at Nebaj, Guatemala*, Carnegie Institution of Washington Publications, 594, Washington, D.C., 1951, pl. 59b.
3. Francis Robicsek, *A Study in Maya Art and History: The Mat Symbol*, New York, 1975, fig. 279a.

Jade Mosaic Head Pendant

The Maya human head pendant inlaid with green jade mosaic particles and spondylus shell on a hollow wooden armature, also inlaid with jade, has eyes of obsidian and mother-of-pearl that gaze pensively out at the viewer. It is topped with a monster mask headdress, the eyes of which are also fashioned from obsidian and mother-of-pearl. There is a perforation in the right ear for a ring, now lost. The right side of the mask was originally void but restored with a resinous material painted red, although jade was not added here.



*Jade Mosaic
Head Pendant*

From the earliest times native Americans wore monster mask headdresses. Animals as protective devices occur not only in the art of the Americas but also throughout the lands in the South Seas, not necessarily in the status of deities. Such jade plaques would have been worn on collars or waistbands, as single chest pendants, or appended to elaborate headdresses.

M.A.D.

JADE MOSAIC HEAD PENDANT

Height, 4 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Maya; about 8th century A.D.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Elizabeth Kennedy Easby and John F. Scott, *Before Cortés: Sculpture of Middle America*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1970, no. 188, and frontispiece.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 90; *Before Cortés: Sculpture of Middle America*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, September 30, 1970–January 3, 1971, no. 188; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1973.



*Jade
Mosaic
Plaque*

Jade Mosaic Plaque

The particles of this mosaic of green jade were found loose, but, like the head pendant, it was probably originally set on wood—perhaps on a flat piece so that it could function as a plaque—and was more than likely worn in the same manner as the pendant. The central element of flattened nose (below the large drill hole) and mouth with upturned upper lip and drilled corners was probably salvaged from an earlier artifact. The eyes are bean-shaped, and the earpools have drill marks at their centers. The plaque is a good example of Maya ingenuity at adapting form to medium, never wasting the precious jade. Another such mosaic—fifteen inches high and made from jade and shell fragments—was found at the site of Tikal, Guatemala.¹

M.A.D.

JADE MOSAIC PLAQUE

Height, 2½ inches

Maya; 600–900 A.D.

NOTE

1. Norman Hammond, *Ancient Maya Civilization*, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 1982, pp. 268–69.

Painted Terra-cotta Vase

A vibrant hand long ago captured the inhabitants of the ancient Maya netherworld on a painted terra-cotta funerary vase now in the Guennol Collection. It was a world of ghoulish gods and gruesome acts—the Maya world of the dead. The function of this vase and others is probably funerary, since many of them have been found in tombs.¹

Iconographically, the creatures on the vase—painted in brown and orange on a buff ground—are united by their association with water—an underworld diagnostic.² There is a frog, or toad, known as the *uinal* monster—the deity of the *uinal* period, a measure of twenty days in the



*Painted
Terra-cotta Vase:
two views*

Maya Long Count system—whose headdress is being nibbled at by a fish, a metaphor for death. A rather complacent-looking water-lily jaguar—the most feline-looking and ubiquitous of jaguar representations in the Maya corpus—affects a dancing posture; water-lily vegetation sprouts from its head. That the jaguar is a creature of the night adds to its underworld associations. Last, an anthropomorph emerges from the open jaws of a serpent while blowing on a conch.

In translating the glyphic inscriptions of the Guennol pot, Michael D. Coe noted that the pot bore the emblem glyph for Calakmul; an emblem glyph signifies a site, like our state or national flags do.³ (Coe suggested that the Guennol piece was painted by the same artist who executed an example in The Metropolitan Museum of Art.)⁴

M.A.D.

PAINTED TERRA-COTTA VASE

Height, 5½ inches

Maya; environs of Calakmul, Mexico, Late Classic period, 600–900 A.D.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Michael D. Coe, *The Lords of the Underworld*, The Art Museum, Princeton, 1978, no. 3.

EXHIBITED: *The Lords of the Underworld*, The Art Museum, Princeton University, March 4–June 18, 1978, no. 3; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1981.

NOTES

1. Michael D. Coe, *The Maya Scribe and His World*, New York, 1973, p. 11.
2. Michael D. Coe, *The Lords of the Underworld*, The Art Museum, Princeton, 1978, no. 3.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., no. 4.

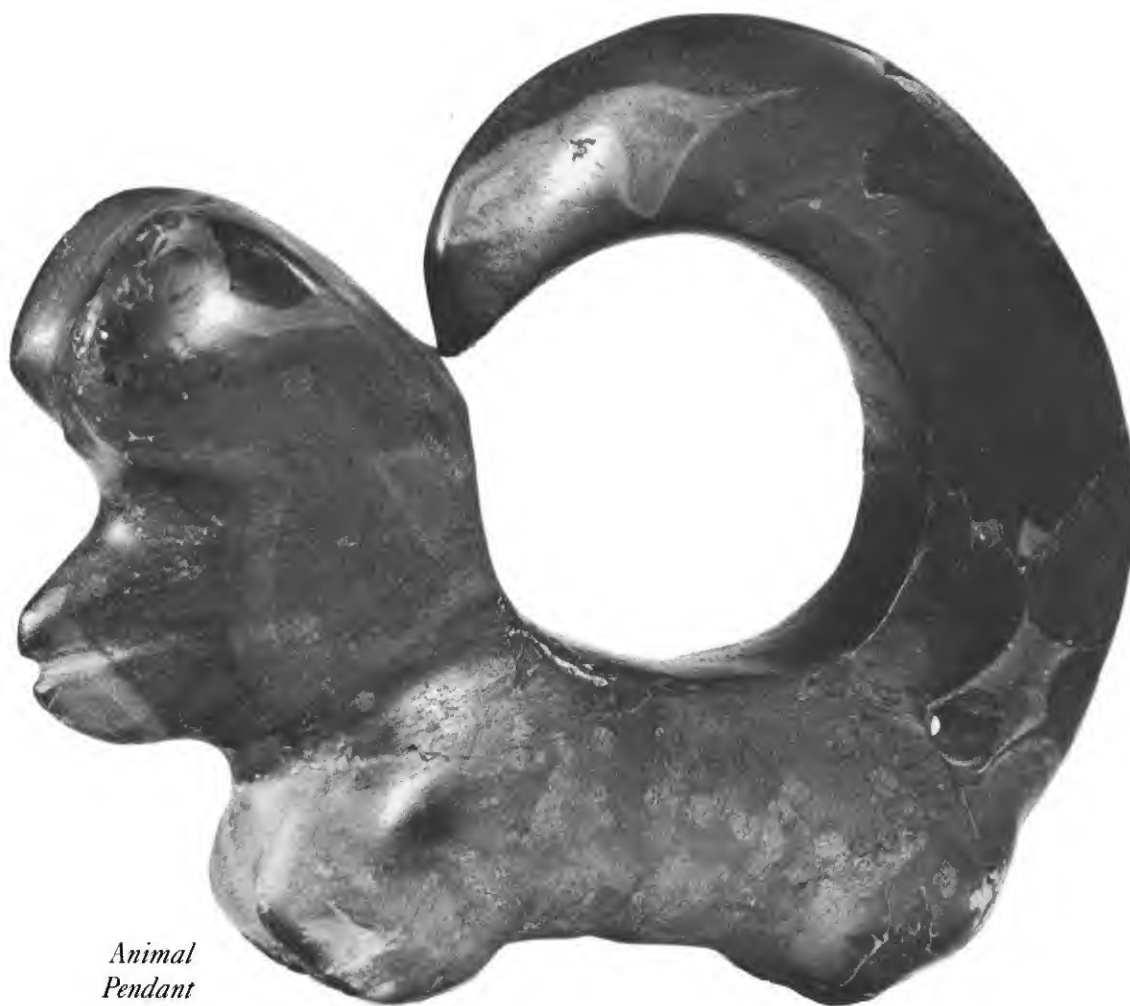
Animal Pendant

Many remarkable sculptural pendants and small charms have been discovered in pre-Columbian sites throughout Middle America. These include objects of gold, jade, bone, and shell, among other materials. Some are realistic in form while others have been fashioned in shapes that are strange to modern eyes—and totally unidentifiable today. Many are realistic but more are abstract—so much so that they are truly triumphs of “modern” art.

One of these is the curly-tailed zoöomorphic Guennol animal. Other related examples in gold, jade, and a variety of hard stone have much the same form; whether monkey, dog, or jaguar—even some representations of birds are also known—they have four legs, a cylindrical body, a head that is usually raised, and are often in a crouching or walking position. Some, commonly termed “begging dogs,” are upright, with raised front paws. The most unusual feature of these objects is the tail: it almost invariably curls up over the back, in a circular design. Some tails touch the body to form a closed loop, while others are open at the end. All tails are disproportionately large, tending to become the most immediately visible feature of the object.

All seem to have been used as pendants, if one can make such an assumption based upon the common presence of a suspension hole drilled in the tail (as in this example) or, more frequently, through the forepaws. Gold pendants frequently have small rings attached to the paws during their casting, but many are not drilled in this fashion; the suspension ring is actually the circle of the tail itself. Most of these zoöomorphic pendants come from the vicinity of Coclé, Panama; others, from an area ranging from southern Costa Rica to northern Colombia. All date to the Classic period.

F.J.D.



*Animal
Pendant*

ANIMAL PENDANT

Calcined agate

Height, 4 inches

Sitio Conte; Coclé, Panama, about 250–750 A.D.

PROVENANCE: Excavated by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, about 1933 (Trench v. cache 26).

EX COLL.: Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Samuel K. Lothrop, *Coclé, An Archaeological Study of Central Panama*, Memoirs of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University, VII, Cambridge, Mass., 1937, fig. 171.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1951.

Steatite Mortar

The Chavín culture of Peru, one of the earliest in the northern Andean region yet discovered, is renowned for its many superbly crafted objects recovered by archaeologists. Carefully worked clay vessels, sculpture in wood and in stone, and hammered sheet-gold jewelry are all prize examples of the aesthetic triumphs of the Chavín people. One of their primary deities was the so-called feline god; it figures in many Chavín linear designs that were incised or modeled upon clay and stone surfaces.

One of the lesser-known examples of Chavín art is the mortar, a small cylindrical receptacle usually made of steatite, or soapstone, with elaborate carving around its circumference. The Guennol mortar, while small in size, is monumental in concept. Created from tan stone, it is in the form of a tiny globular-bodied feline standing on four squat legs, with a curling tail and bared fangs. On the creature's back is a cylindrical bowl, which forms the body of the mortar. The surface of the vessel has



*Steatite
Mortar*

a well-polished patina. The animal is in almost perfect condition, having suffered only a tiny chip on one leg.

The original function of these small vessels is not well understood; too few have been recovered from archaeological sites to determine their purpose. It is likely that they served as mortars for medicines, sacred herbs, cosmetic paints, or as containers for treasured powders, gold dust, or similar materials. (Because this example has been thoroughly cleaned, no residue has survived for possible identification.) Indeed, the sculptural quality of this miniature effigy is irresistibly reminiscent of one of the well-known carved diorite jaguar mortars in the collections of The University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia. Both have a powerful, stocky, smoothly rounded body; short but strong stubby legs, a graceful tail, and the characteristic jaguar head found in Chavín art. The mortar emplacement on the back of each object indicates a similarity in function, emphasizing this parallel.

F.J.D.

STEATITE MORTAR

Height, 1 $\frac{7}{8}$ inches

Chavín culture; Tembladera, Cajamarca, Peru, about 900–200 B.C.

Incised Llama Bone

The use of a variety of animal bones for artistic, religious, and social purposes was apparently widespread in pre-Columbian Peru. Nearly every period in the prehistory of this Andean region has provided evidence of the carving of llama, alpaca, vicuña, deer, condor, puma, and dog bones; other bones were occasionally used in later periods. While we have no way of knowing the precise functions of many of the finely worked objects, we do have clearly recognizable examples of bone spatulas, ear ornaments, finger rings, needles, spindle whorls, flutes, spoons, and ornamental beads. Many of these objects were also inlaid with jet, shell, and turquoise to improve their appearance, value, and efficacy.

The small fragment of a llama leg bone in the Guennol Collection was carelessly handled after excavation and has suffered considerable damage. Its original function is uncertain, but even in its present condition it clearly demonstrates the skill of the ancient Peruvian



*Incised
Llama
Bone*

craftsman. The design of a feline god wearing a serpent headdress is incised on the shaft; both creatures were important Chavín deities. The deeply cut lines, which were subsequently colored with red and black pigment, brushed onto the surface, are carefully controlled. The ability of the artist to achieve the desired effects with a metal or stone graver is impressive.

Surviving bone artifacts are relatively rare, because of their fragility and their tendency to deteriorate. In addition to those objects mentioned previously, it should be recalled that coca chewing was a common practice in the Andean region, and small spoons were needed for the purpose. Many were carved of bone, and often elaborately decorated. It may be that, just as the Mediterranean peoples and the Orientals used small bones for artistic, religious, and divinatory purposes, ancient Peruvians used some of these carved objects for similar functions.

F.J.D.

INCISED LLAMA BONE

Height, 5½ inches; width, 1¼ inches

Chavín culture; Tembladera, Cajamarca, Peru, about 900–200 B.C.

PROVENANCE: Said to be from Jequetepeque Valley.

EX COLL.: Edward Merrin.

Tribal Arts

FREDERICK J. DOCKSTADER

WITH

TERENCE BARROW

JOSEPH P. CARR

DIANA FANE

ALASTAIR BRADLEY MARTIN

DOROTHY JEAN RAY

Tribal Arts

To have a hand, however minor, in furthering the Guennol Collection is not only a privilege and a pleasure, but, even more, is an attractive exercise in assessing the quality and taste of the collectors, and of judging how well their selectivity has stood the test of time. One immediately senses the remarkable change in interest of Alastair and Edith Martin, as well as of the art world through which they have wisely and prudently navigated, and the fact that the collection has enjoyed an active role in this change. One also learns once again that “there is nothing new under the sun” in comparing the old with the new; even modern art is old-fashioned, as noted in volume I, when one examines the various forms of aesthetic expression created by man in the distant and recent past. The wisdom of these individual selections proves itself fully when one views the Guennol slices of eternity, for, no matter what one’s taste may be, there is something here for all to enjoy.

Alas, it must also be admitted that nowhere does this change make itself felt as keenly as in price. It is amusing that volume I of *The Guennol Collection* notes “prices are at or near an all-time high”; now, seven years later, they are still rising. So much for prophecy; there seems little likelihood that they will subside very soon, if ever. That the collection has had its role in this development is equally undeniable.

Having been assigned the responsibility of adding a sober note along the road of soaring passion leading to the palace of wisdom, one observes that the contents of the present volume have certainly surpassed the Mosan Triptych in preëminency and excitement. Admittedly, this is a note of personal bias, but one firmly embraced. In general, the Guennol Principles of Catholicity, so well outlined by Alastair Bradley Martin in his introductory statement in volume I, continue inviolate, and therefore appear to rest upon firm ground. Only one remark requires mild rebuttal: “The Indians of North

America are not usually regarded as sculptors." Through increased familiarity with the masterworks of the so-called "Mound People,"¹ particularly their great carved stone pipes or sculptured stone effigies; surrealistic Eskimo masks of driftwood; and Northwest Coast Indian masks, rattles, house posts, and totem poles, this attitude has changed radically. True, one would not challenge the relative place of sculpture in Mexican, or Middle or South American, prehistoric life; but comparisons are, indeed, odious, and that there did exist a major sculptural tradition on North America has become clearly understood and accepted.

There have been many fine additions to the collection, as well as some new problems that have arisen out of the need to continue in the directions set at the beginning. Pre-Columbian acquisitions have been sustained with the addition of several unusual examples—notably, the Tennessee incised shell gorget; the beautiful Chavín carved steatite mortar; and the jauntily prancing Coclé animal. Most of the Martins' recent collection activity has gravitated toward the ethnological, that is, historic art from North America, particularly the Southwest. Carvings such as the beautifully worked Grass Dance whistle from the Dakota, the superb Haida frontlet, the Kwakiutl clapper, and the silver concha belts are prime examples, while the delicacy of the Pomo feather "gift basket," the several zoöomorphic stone fetishes from Acoma, Hopi, and Zuñi pueblos, and the stark unsophisticated execution of the Penitente Efigie de la Muerte provide dramatic contrasts to each other.

These are all exciting examples of the "new interest" in the ethnic arts that has lured many objects from their hiding places: old masks, fetishes, altarpieces, and similar exotica have qualified as candidates for inclusion in the collection. Other unusual objets d'art—little known and less appreciated in the past—have taken on a new luster and gained acceptance through the willingness of the art world to look beyond the boundaries of the latest fads. Yesterday's curiosities have become today's aesthetic triumphs.

It seems unlikely that our concepts of art will ever return to those of the benighted past; along with the development of an educated public, far too much time and too many resources have been invested in effecting the change. Yet, while there are successful new discoveries, there remain a fair number of works to which that felicitous term "interesting" still justifiably applies. Countless exhibitions of tribal arts have been held in the years between the birth of the Guennol Collection, the publication of its first catalogue, and today; many of these have provided remarkable displays of man's aesthetic skill. Others have stumbled over the problem of including attractive oddities for the major reason of their historic singularity rather than their aesthetic merit.

The additions to the collection since the publication of volume I clearly reflect the expanding enthusiasm of the Martins, in which the desire for novelty, a sharpened interest in new worlds to be conquered, and a broadening of interest have all played a part. The degree of availability of works of art has had both positive and negative effects. On the one hand, the quantity

is more limited: many fine objects have been plucked by others, or are no longer available at any price. On the other hand, higher prices have caused some less remarkable specimens to appear on the market, as well as objects that have attracted the artful talents of restorers—and one should not overlook outright fraud. This cluttering of the marketplace has made astute selection difficult. However, just as the marten, that indefatigable and omnivorous hunter, fishes in many waters, so has the Master of Guennol persistently stalked his prey.

The continuum does make clearly evident the unremitting maturity of interest of the Guennol Collection in keeping pace with an ever-expanding field. It has had to contend with new concerns; the drying up of some areas and the emergence of others; the permutations of fads and fancies; and a new breed of collector-dealer markedly different in character from the old. Lastly, with new laws on the books—particularly the UNESCO Treaty, to whose terms many developed as well as Third World nations have subscribed—the acquisition and/or export of art has been severely restricted in some areas. This has not only had a paralyzing effect upon collectors of pre-Columbian art in the Americas, but seems certain to levy an ever increasing mortmain that may prove to be healthy, or may in time simply accelerate the very process it is designed to control.

Guennol has adjusted smoothly to these problems, continuing to grow, while its guardians have managed to observe the ethics of collecting and to remain financially solvent in the progress. The quality of the new additions demonstrates this success.

F.J.D.

NOTE

1. Gordon F. Ekholm and Samuel K. Lothrop, "Effigy Pipe from Indiana," in *The Guennol Collection*, I, ed. Ida Ely Rubin, New York, 1975, p. 295.

Fetishes, Charms, and Amulets

The Guennol Collection includes so many objects that may be considered magical charms and fetishes that it seems best to discuss all of them in a single essay. Far too little is known of their origins and individual functions to attempt to make any discrete distinctions among them. As with many native art objects, unless one knows the makers and the specific purposes for which they were intended, there is no way to determine for certain how they were used; the design vocabulary is too vast, and classification beyond very generalized categories is rarely possible.

The term *fetish* (from the Portuguese *feitiço*, the French *fétiche*, but originally from the Latin *facticius*, “artificial”) implies a man-made or man-devised object capable of controlling various outside forces. Such objects can be magical impulsors; creations designed to attract the eye or the attention of the spirits; visual reminders of the presence of the spirit of the particular being who is represented by the charm; or objects that, in themselves, possess sacred, psychic, or magical qualities that are at the call of the holder of the charm. Peoples throughout the world use such fetishes, charms, and amulets for a multiplicity of purposes that vary with the sophistication of the owner. It is easy today to dismiss such creations as mere barbaric superstition, yet who has not treasured a lucky penny, a four-leaf clover, or a rabbit’s foot? They, too, are fetishes, or charms, involving a level of belief.

These small objects might guarantee good hunting, confidence of victory in warfare, success in love, plentiful crops, or human fertility—indeed, that all would be well if one owned such talismans. Increase-by-magic is a particularly common function of such charms: they can provide richer crops, more extensive herds, more game animals, and larger families. Yet they could also insure the reverse—all magic has its black and white aspects, and can be benign or malevolent. Fetishes could be used in witchcraft to cast a spell, to cause sickness, to bring harm to an enemy, or to produce other malicious results.

The shapes and forms of fetishes are as diverse as the materials from which they are made: bear, deer, coyote, buffalo, elk, walrus, seal, whale, eagle, and hawk are perhaps the most common, but there are bats, doves, wolves, antelopes, and humans (though rarely children), as well. Fetishes are of turquoise, shell, ivory, bone, wood, stone, and clay, and vary in size from tiny objects less than one-half inch in length to large three-foot-long sculptures. Most are of a size that can be carried comfortably on the person—usually between two and five inches overall.

Small fetishes are carried as ornaments, in special pouches made for the purpose; fastened to clothing, weapons, or implements; or kept in special niches in the home or in the kiva. (A kiva is an underground

room or sanctuary—although some of the Rio Grande Pueblos have ground-level kivas—reserved for ceremonial and ritual performances, or as a retreat where men relax, work on ritual paraphernalia, or pray, not unlike our own men's clubs or lodge halls.) Charm pouches also often contain corn pollen or other plant substances for feeding and blessing the fetish. When not in use, Pueblo fetishes are kept in special vessels and are fed daily—either corn pollen or the food its owners eat. Effective fetish use insures the bearer power and a smooth life—a feeling that “all's right with the world.” Often fetishes are created in sets, such as medicine paraphernalia intended to be used *en masse* for maximum potency.

Fetishes are often realistic, with carefully worked features, inlaid eyes, and limbs, tails, heads, and other body parts, to indicate the creature depicted. Some are extremely abstract forms, perhaps conventionalized through long tradition, making identification difficult; others are unaltered natural objects, the so-called *naturfacts* (to distinguish them from man-made “artifacts”), representing the earliest examples of the “found art” that is so popular today. These may be geological concretions, odd-shaped pebbles, colorful stones, or exotically formed or marked objects, and are among the most highly prized and revered types of fetishes, for they are obvious “gifts of the gods,” treasured for whatever visual or mental image they might suggest.

Found objects are often elaborated upon by detailed carving, incising, or coloring, and are frequently combined with other materials, or attachments, to increase their efficacy; for example, the addition of feathers, small beads, or flint arrowpoints is a common Zuñi practice. In recent years the growing number of collectors interested in the Southwest has made this practice particularly notorious, and a major proportion of the fetishes found in curio shops have no indigenous function; they were made solely for commercial gain, for sale to non-Indian purchasers. The influence of dealers has been primarily responsible for many of the more grotesque forms of fetishes seen today.

We have greater knowledge of Pueblo (particularly Zuñi) fetishes than we do of those of the Eskimo or Eastern Woodlands peoples. The Zuñi probably make the greatest use of fetishes, followed closely by the Navajo and the Eskimo. Plains tribes adopt naturalistic objects as charms; the ubiquitous *iniskim* of the Blackfoot is such an example, as is the *migis* of the Great Lakes tribes. Probably every Indian group—and also white people—observes some form of object respect, beyond the simple fascination with an exotic form: it involves a strong faith in spiritual power, the belief that each person, plant, animal, or object possesses a spirit of its own that can be controlled by securing that spirit, and that this power is in direct proportion to the inner purity of the holder of the fetish.

Individuals usually create their own fetish or charm with a particular purpose in mind; it is effective only when in the possession of the owner. Priests and society leaders employ fetishes for the benefit of the group—these are usually the so-called kiva fetishes, normally the prop-

erty of the society or the tribe—and witches are feared for the power that they can exercise over others through such means. In many cultures, the professional artists create charms, and it is believed that an individual's skill, experience, and religious status enhance the effect of his products. It is often possible to identify the creations of such artists, many of whom have become well known for their efforts: Leekya Deyuse, Leo Poblano, and Teddy Weahkie were especially popular Zuñi carvers whose work sold equally widely to their neighbors, other Indians, and white collectors. It is believed that the sale of a fetish does not necessarily invoke any particular harm: since white men do not believe in these fetishes, purchasing them will not impart any power—positive or negative—to the new owner; the fetishes become inert objects once again, for their power is inherent in the accompanying belief of their holder.

Ownership of a fetish does not simply represent the happy possession of a “good luck” token; it involves a definite burden of responsibility. The fetish must be housed, fed, and protected, and outsiders must be shielded from the dangerous qualities it is believed to possess. Although most Indians believe that these amulets have permanent power, some feel that charms lose that force once they have been used in a given ceremony. If a fetish fails to bring a desired result, no blame is attached to the object; rather, the feeling is that the owner is somehow at fault—perhaps lacking in belief, purity of spirit, or intensity of purpose. Fetishes are not thrown away at the death of the owner; they are usually retained by the family, particularly if the charm has been beneficial during the life of the deceased. Fetishes that were ineffective, or suspected of having been employed in witchcraft or of possessing other negative qualities, are usually buried. Although the comparison may seem a bit imprecise, some of the container-type fetishes—the large *iáriko* (the perfect ear of corn) and the Ashiwani rain fetish that houses the body of a small frog, for example, might be likened to Catholic reliquaries: all contain venerated parts of once-living holy beings.

Fetishes are known from prehistoric times, and, although we cannot be certain of the function of carvings excavated from archaeological sites, one can presume that certain zoöomorphic and anthropomorphic forms were employed as fetishes in ancient times. Aside from the several Eskimo examples, the fetishes in the Guennol Collection for the most part are not prehistoric; some date from the middle to the late nineteenth century, and many were made within the last twenty years. Their value as art objects depends not upon their age but upon their aesthetic significance, when measured against other ethnologically functional objects of interest to collectors.

F.J.D.

Four Ivory Figurines

Sites on St. Lawrence Island off the northwestern coast of Alaska have yielded a quantity of remarkable ivory carvings that illustrate the major themes and styles of almost two thousand years of Alaskan Eskimo art. To the surprise of many archaeologists, the later styles are less elaborate than the earlier ones. Utensils and hunting equipment share in this stylistic development, demonstrating the close relationship between artistic and technical traditions in prehistoric Alaska. During the period of the Thule people, the direct ancestors of the modern Eskimo, harpoon heads were no longer engraved as they had been in earlier cultures; similarly, the emphasis in the small sculptures was on the forms themselves rather than on surface detail. The long and varied history of ivory carving on St. Lawrence Island makes it clear that this simplification reflects an aesthetic preference, and not a limitation imposed by ivory as a medium. Thule artists clearly had complete mastery over their materials.

*Four Ivory Figurines:
from left to right,
female walrus, human,
male walrus, seal*



The group of four figurines in the Guennol Collection, representing a human, a pair of walrus, and a seal, date to the early Thule period. They were excavated together on St. Lawrence Island and, fortunately, have entered the collection together, as a rare example of a figurine cache. All the figurines are made of walrus ivory, which has acquired a rich amber color from long burial in the frozen ground. In form and technique the four carvings are closely related and were probably made by the same artist.

Although in keeping with the Thule style the forms are simplified and compact, there is no question about the identity of the figurines. They realistically depict the most important inhabitants of the Eskimo world, without decorative or fantastic details. The largest and most powerfully realized is the male walrus, portrayed rearing up on his front flippers in a show of muscular strength. The facial features are minimal, but well placed: two tiny lines for nostrils, dots for eyes, a simple indentation for the mouth. Only blunt tusks are represented, and no protruding parts detract from the main form.

The small walrus, presumably female, is an elegant companion piece, with her head bowed in a graceful arc. The front flippers, carved in low relief, are visible only from the underside, where they are pressed close to the body as though the walrus were swimming. To enhance the animal's streamlined appearance, the back flippers have been eliminated.

The seal is one step further in abstraction: an undercut jaw is the sole facial feature indicated. Only the subtle proportions of head and tail establish the sea mammal's identity and indicate its direction in space.

The human figure has features that relate it to the older tradition of figurine carving as well as traits that are new to the Thule period. The reduction of the arms to stubs and the elimination of the legs are forms of sculptural abbreviation of the human figure that have existed from the earliest period of Eskimo art; the head and torso are the prime loci of interest. Characteristic of the Thule period are the relative flatness of the figure and the shallow carving of the facial features. The head, which is shaped so as to suggest a bobbed hairstyle, is set off from the body by a short, wide neck.

In general, Thule animal figurines are pierced, whereas the human figurines are not. This group conforms to the pattern: the seal and the smaller walrus have oval perforations in their tails; the large walrus has a hole through one of the back flippers. The holes were probably for suspension, but it is impossible to know whether they were secured to each other—in a bundle—or to a piece of clothing or equipment. As there are holes only in one end, the carvings must have dangled, adding weight and movement to the object from which they were suspended.

Each of these figurines is worthy of careful consideration separately, but as a group they have a special appeal, revealing an attitude toward man in relation to animals that is distinctly Eskimo. The human figure, stripped of the limbs on which its upright stature depends, has been

distorted to fit animal canons of grace; the sympathetic bond between man and animals finds expression in their representation as formal equivalents.

The theme of this group must be the hunt, an activity that was central to Eskimo economic and religious life. On the basis of contemporary practice, it has been surmised that these four figures formed a bundle, a kind of magical “crew” to accompany the hunter in his boat and to insure the safety and success of the hunt. Their small scale and imagery would have suited them to such a task, and they might well have provided several generations of Arctic hunters with power and protection at sea.

D.F.

FOUR IVORY FIGURINES

Height of tallest figurine, 4 inches

Thule culture; St. Lawrence Island, Alaska, 1000–1500

“Mother Corn” Fetish

Of all the fetishes, perhaps the most graceful and the most ancient is the “mother corn” shape; it is related to the perfect ear of corn (*iáriko*) given to all initiates and used on almost every Pueblo altar. These are selected from among natural stone forms, usually from a waterworn river boulder, suggesting the rounded cylindrical shape of an ear of corn, carved in the conical style of this example. Many of these are quite plain, while others have incised or shallow-cut limbs and a neck indication, with drilled eyes, nose, and mouth, usually inlaid with turquoise or shell. A few have ears and hair incised, but these are less common. Once completed, such fetishes have a quiet beauty all their own.

The Guennol example of limestone, or possibly granite, is characteristic of the most effective *iáriko* sculpture. The upper end of this charm is the natural, worn end of the stone; eyes and mouth have been cut into the surface and the brows and nose are indicated by shallow cutting. Turquoise beads have been inlaid into the eyes and mouth. At one time, hematite or vermilion pigment was rubbed over the entire surface of the object. The lower end is irregular and may have been ground slightly smooth to provide a flat base.



"Mother Corn"
Fetish

These are used in kivas—the underground rooms reserved for ceremonial and ritual performances. When a ceremony is in progress, the society responsible for the rite sets up its own altar. These may vary from a few simple objects to an elaborately constructed framework, painted backdrop, offering bowls, prayer plumes, prayer sticks, altar fetishes, and spirit guardians; some even have colorful sand paintings as part of the decoration. This specimen is of the type that would have been placed in front of the upright back of the altar. There is usually more than one stone charm, and occasionally a ceremony will include a half dozen or more.

This *iáriko* fetish is described as “having been collected at Zia Pueblo the early part of this century.” It is of the type and form that were in regular use throughout the Pueblos during the past several hundred years. Since such fetishes are carefully protected from harm when not in use, it is almost impossible to establish their precise origin or age on the basis of their condition.

F.J.D.

“MOTHER CORN” FETISH

Limestone (?)

Height, 6 $\frac{9}{16}$ inches; diameter, 2 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

Zia Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1875–1925

Three Kiva Fetishes

The most typical individual kiva fetish from Santo Domingo, New Mexico, is the small cylindrical carved quartz *kopishtaya*, in the form of a seated figurine with arms and legs curled in to the body and an oversize head. Sometimes the eyes are inlaid with bits of rough turquoise held in place by resinous adhesive, and the neck is decorated with strings of small shell and turquoise beads tied with sinew; one such example has a large abalone shell pendant.

These three kiva fetishes were said to have been obtained from the Turquoise Kiva (Shuwamo Chikya), where they had been stored for several years. The same form occurs in much larger examples, which are not carried about the person in medicine pouches, but are frequently placed on the altar during specific ceremonies that are held in kivas.

F.J.D.



*Three Kiva
Fetishes*

THREE KIVA FETISHES

Quartz

Height, each, 3 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

Santo Domingo Pueblo; New Mexico, 1900–30

PROVENANCE: Reported to be from Turquoise (Summer) Kiva.

Wooden Macaw

Most Pueblo tribes use elaborate altar constructions in their religious celebrations. The altars may be of wood, or of cloth and wood, with painted, sculptured, and feathered decorations. The back of the altar, similar to the Roman Catholic *reredos*, is set vertically against the wall of the kiva, in which many of these ceremonies take place; some are given both private and public performances, the latter held in the village plaza.

The sacred accessories that decorate these altars vary with tradition; each ceremony has its own prescribed assortment of important materials and equipment. They range from small pottery vessels and charms to large wood or stone sculptures, prayer sticks, and ritual objects, most of which are variously painted and feathered, with turquoise and shell ornaments. These are usually newly made for each rite, thereby giving a fresh, colorful appearance to the assemblage.

Zoöomorphic forms are important in these celebrations and include not only quadrupeds but also reptiles and birds. The most common are various native birds: doves, eagles, hawks, parrots, and macaws.

*Wooden
Macaw*



Macaws, while formerly indigenous to the Southwest, have been killed off, and most of them are now in Mexico. Originally, the avian decorations were probably actual birds—living or dead; later, they may have been stuffed, with the skin of the bird removed, filled with grasses, dried, and placed on the altar. In time, these were replaced with carved wooden replicas (no doubt because they were easier to acquire and care for) that varied in size from a few inches to over two feet in length.

The Guennol altar bird apparently represents a large macaw (*Ara ararauna*?); it is painted blue and yellow, with a red beak. It was intended to perch on the upright of the altar. Normally there are four to six such bird replicas, all similar, placed across the top of the altar, all carved of cottonwood and painted. The wings on this example are not carved, but are delineated with paint. The graceful sweep of the body suggests the sleek lines of the bird at rest. It should be pointed out that these objects, while venerated, are not worshiped; they are regarded as the symbolic presence of the bird and are expected to transmit the aura and the prayers of the priests.

F.J.D.

WOODEN MACAW

Length, 14 inches

Santo Domingo Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1915

EX COLL.: Oscar T. Branson, Tucson.

Mountain Lion Fetish

While the ancient pueblo of Acoma, touted by some enthusiastic individuals as “the oldest city in the United States,” certainly antedates the eastern claimant to that distinction (St. Augustine, Florida), it falls far short of Oraibi, the Hopi center, whose original date of construction has been established by tree rings as about 1125 A.D. Acoma was probably built about 1250, and has been more or less continuously occupied ever since, as has Oraibi, but it is not fully occupied today. Slowly the inhabitants have moved from the top of the mesa to the neighboring towns of Acomita and McCartys, a few miles distant, returning to the village only for ceremonial or social visits.

The abandonment of some sections of Acoma has caused many dwellings to crumble through neglect. It was in this context that the Guennol mountain lion stone fetish was discovered: two non-Indians,



*Mountain Lion
Fetish*

poking through the rubble of an old, collapsed structure at the end of the mesa, discovered it where it had been placed many decades earlier, as a guardian to the entryway of an also abandoned kiva. Carved of stratified sandstone, it is a superb example of Pueblo fetish art. The coloring suggests the reddish brown and tan of the mountain lion, and the layers underscore its zoöomorphic appearance. It is in good condition, although showing wear; there is a chip near the rump, and one front leg was broken off in years past. The eyes have been slightly drilled, but are not inlaid; shallow cuts indicate the head, body, and tail.

It is quite clear that this fetish was intended to represent the mountain lion (or cougar), but greater interest lies in the unique design of the “horned toad” (*Phrynosoma cornutum*) that appears as a shallow carving on one side of the lion’s body (the opposite side is plain); it has the diamond-shaped body, long pointed tail, and angular head of the small horned lizard. This is one of very few such examples of the combined mountain lion/horned toad motif known; the connection between the two, and their relationship to Acoma lore remains uncertain. The mountain lion is known to have been the protector and guardian of the ancient Hunter Society, or Shaiyaik people, who controlled all village hunting.

There is little question as to the antiquity of this object. While it cannot be dated precisely, it certainly was made no later than the mid-nineteenth century and, very conceivably, could be much earlier. Stone carvings of this type, protected during their use and then stored away, are almost impossible to date accurately, once antiquity has left its patina.

F.J.D.

MOUNTAIN LION FETISH

Sandstone

Length, 6 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches

Acoma Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1800–50(?)

Pair of Mountain Lion Effigies

Of all of the zoöomorphic stone charms and fetishes used in Pueblo ritual, perhaps none is more attractive than these large mountain lions. Although they appear in many shapes and sizes, all follow a general style, of which the Guennol pair is quite characteristic.

The *tohopko* (from *toho*, or “panther,” and *poko*, “pet”) fetish is regarded as the guardian of the home, the person, and the kiva. He is placed in the foreground on the altar to protect its sanctity and power, and is thought to keep evil away and to assure the longevity of the person or function that he guards. The *tohopko* is also a welcome assistant to the hunter, preventing his fatigue and helping to find the

*Pair of
Mountain Lion
Effigies*



quarry. The fetish can bring the hunter to the evildoer, but it is normally a friendly, beneficial aide.

In Pueblo legend the *tohopko* is also thought to be a pet of the gods; when found in pairs they are frequently said to be "altar pets." As with other types of sacred objects, the *tohopko* is carefully put away in a safe home, where he is protected, fed sacred corn meal daily, and prayed over, so that he will not lose his power, feel neglected, and thus turn away from the people.

This pair of lions is unusually large, but not unique; while a few occur as long as twelve to fourteen inches most range from six to ten inches. The eyes have been drilled with shallow holes, and small cuts indicate the mouths. The lions were carved of stratified sandstone carefully chosen to resemble the cougar in color and are from the Hopi people; they were collected about 1925 to 1935, according to the finding reports at which time they were said to be "very old." Although this is a common statement for religious objects, the Guennol effigies reflect every indication of considerable antiquity.

F.J.D.

PAIR OF MOUNTAIN LION EFFIGIES

Sandstone

Lengths, 15 $\frac{3}{16}$ inches and 16 inches

Hopi Pueblo; Arizona, date unknown (before 1925?)

EX COLL.: Everett Dunlap, Palm Springs, California.



War God Effigy

The Guennol War God effigy is a distinctive, recognizable form of ethnic art, even within the Zuñi aesthetic vocabulary, and a very effective one. The manner in which the planes of the War God's face have been indicated in the elongated head and the mere suggestion of body form provide a remarkably successful solution to the presentation of a full figure. Not a stroke or cut is wasted. Its clean line of the face with sweeping nose and chin, abbreviated torso, and sketchy hands recall to mind the great stone (probably wood in earlier times) *moai* figures on the island of Rapa Nui, off the coast of Chile.

The Guennol effigy is a very stylized conception of one of the Twin War Gods that figured importantly in Zuñi mythology. These two beings appeared in numerous episodes of the legend of Creation and were responsible for many things—good and bad—that happened to people. In their war aspect they are known as Uyuyewi and Mátsailema, and are greatly feared; they inspired the small *wémaxe* animal fetishes that evolved when the twins burned the Zuñi world. The animals that were left had turned into small stone replicas. The peaceful aspects of the twins are known collectively as Ahayuta, and while this enjoys the same respect, there is a greater sense of affection and happiness attached to the being. Since the Guennol figurine has lost all of its original paint, there is no way to determine which of the several identifications were intended; thus it seems proper to refer to them by the general term Ahayuta.

Such figurines were traditionally carved from pine (usually *Pinus ponderosa*), in the kivas, for particular midwinter ceremonies, and painted in the colors specific to the being represented. When completed, they were set up on the altar, accompanied by the many small stone or wooden accessories that were prepared for them. They were ornamented with elaborate decorations of turquoise, shell, and stone, and surrounded by several dozen offerings, including the netted water shield, bows, arrows, war clubs, sacred staffs, and prayer sticks. One of the most important accessories was the *shóliwe* game stick for the favorite game of the War Gods; the stick was important because the outcome of the game had the power to determine the weather—bringing rain or forestalling it—or war or peace, and to divine the future.

As the ritual progressed, prayers were offered, and the elaborate four-day ceremony introduced other figures as well. Then the War God effigies were taken out to shrines on the crest of nearby Towayálane (“Corn Mountain”), where they were deposited. The sacred meal was offered, prayers said, and—since they had completed their religious functions—the effigies were left to deteriorate; new ones would be made for the next annual ceremony.



*War God
Effigy*

The Guennol figurine, an attenuated cylindrical form, is topped by a pointed cap to represent the knitted cotton helmet worn in ancient times and typical of the War God costume. Beneath the cap is a stylized coiffure in elongated, sweeping lines, with the characteristic sharply cut face, long rectangular nose, and smoothly jutting lower jaw.

The Zuñi people call the long cylindrical shaft inserted in the center of the body "the navel." It symbolizes the center of the world, or the place of emergence, and hence is usually regarded as the umbilicus, but it seems equally certain that, before the pressures of Christian prudery, it was also meant to represent the phallic aspect of human creativity.

As with all of these wooden carvings, exposure to the fierce southwestern storms and to the great heat of the sun has caused deterioration. Although the paint is gone, the wood is partially decayed, and most of the colorful jewelry decorations and feathers have disappeared, the simplicity puts greater emphasis on the remarkable sculptural forms of the figurine.

F.J.D.

WAR GOD EFFIGY

Pine

Height, 27 inches

Zuñi Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1900–1910

Stone Seal Effigy

The working and carving of stone was a common art among the American Indians, as exquisite examples found of pipes and ax-heads from the Eastern and Plains tribes have shown. The Pueblo tribes of the Southwest elevated the carving of stone fetishes to a level that would inspire modern sculptors. Despite the broad scope of the North American Indian tribes and the circumstances that brought about their dissemination, some aspects of their culture have received very little attention. This is the case with the Chumash people of southern California, who inhabited the coastal areas around present-day Santa Barbara and Ventura counties and the Channel Islands off the coastline. By 1850, disease had brought about the extinction of these people. The little that is known of their culture is from the brief

notations in the logs of the early Spanish explorers and from the artifacts that the tribes produced: besides large and colorful rock paintings and the intricate and beautifully designed basketry, they made superbly carved steatite implements and effigies.

The Guennol seal effigy is a rare example of Chumash carving; most of the effigies that have been discovered are of whales. The stone is steatite, or soapstone, and the eyes are shell inlaid with asphaltum. Details of the flippers and mouth are incised.

J.P.C.

STONE SEAL EFFIGY

Steatite

Height, $2\frac{3}{8}$ inches; length, $1\frac{15}{16}$ inches

Chumash tribe; California, about 1600

Ex COLL.: Harvey Mudd, Santa Fe.

*Stone
Seal Effigy*



Incised Shell Gorget

The giant conch shell—usually *Busycon perversum*, *Fasciolaria gigantea*, and, less common, *Cassis madagascarensis*—was widely used by the pre-Columbian artists of the Southeast, due to the size and beauty of the shell, and undoubtedly to its relationship with water and the ocean, as well. These shells were traded far into the interior from the Atlantic and Gulf Coast waters where they first appeared and found a ready market all over. Objects carved from the shell include a great assortment of cups, ladles, buttons, pins, ornaments, insignia, and the magnificent circular gorgets, of which the Guennol specimen is a prime example. These have usually been found in graves, often on the chest of the deceased, giving further support to the belief that they served as pendants.

Shell pendants were formed by cutting a section from the protruding body of the shell (see drawing); the resulting concave hemisphere was then ground smooth and fashioned into a circular object. Holes were drilled for suspension cords and designs were incised or engraved into the surface—normally on the shell exterior, although on occasion the interior was decorated—with chert, flint, or copper implements. That the importance of these pendants lasted into the historic period is demonstrated by their mention in early colonial travel accounts, where white visitors noticed them displayed on local Indians.

A wide variety of designs on pendants are known. Most are linear in style, and include geometric, anthropomorphic, and zoöomorphic forms, and simple combinations of these. Such animals as spiders, bears, serpents, birds, and mythical monsters all figured in the many art styles. The renditions of them vary from simple lines, to remarkably realistic designs incorporating clearly evident outlines, to recondite abstract patterns—albeit displaying a lively imagination and aesthetic inventiveness.

Despite the unfortunate vulnerability of shell to acidic soils, which normally results in the loss of all or part of the detail—and, indeed, often of the entire shell—the Guennol gorget has been remarkably well preserved, and very little of the design is missing. It depicts a coiled rattlesnake with open jaws and upturned snout in profile. The body is coiled around the head and ends in the typical rattlesnake tail; scales are indicated by crosshatched lines. This whole form is a conventionalized design that has many variant styles—some of which are so complex as to be almost impossible to analyze.

The precise significance of the designs is less certain. Many scholars believe that they denoted membership in a society, political position, or social status; others contend that they represented a tribal social hierarchy or organization, in which cult membership played an



*Incised
Shell Gorget*

important part. The theory that the designs come from “the Southern Cult” is supported by the repetition of the basic design, the social customs of the time, and the fact that such gorgets are often found in association with many other apparently religious objects, suggesting an interrelated function and importance. Alternatively, they may have been used as charms or amulets to protect the individual or to gain some benefit for him from the creature depicted on the pendant. Perhaps less likely, they might simply have been clan symbols.

The serpent itself apparently had two forms in the culture of the Southeastern Indians: that of the Great Horned Snake and the rattlesnake. The former, a greatly feared mythical being, was widely known among Eastern and Southeastern Woodlands Indians and seems to have had some relationship to the feathered serpent of the Southwest and Mexico. Rituals and dances celebrating this concept have survived up to the very recent past among the Alibamu, Cherokee, Creek, Koasati, Seminole, and Yuchi peoples; all of these ceremonies had a bearing

upon weather, and curing powers. The rattlesnake—actually a representation of the great diamondback rattler of the Southeast (*Crotalus adamanteus*), or of the smaller and more common yellow rattler (*Crotalus horridus*)—while occasionally shown with wings or a single horn, is readily identified by the presence of clearly delineated rattles (here at the lower left). The importance of this creature is shown by the proliferation of snake cults, clans, and rituals, and by the wide use of rattlesnake designs in other art forms of the Southeastern Indians. Some tribes also have a “snake chief” as part of their politico-religious organization.

F.J.D.

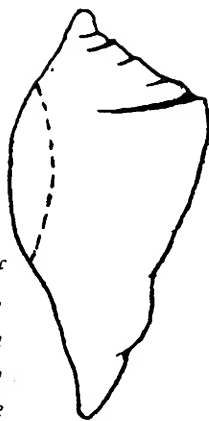
INCISED SHELL GORGET

Height, 6½ inches; width, 5⅜ inches

Williams Island(?), Tennessee, Mississippian period, about 1600

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1949.

Drawing of
shell with
gorget section
indicated by
dotted line



One Step Beyond

As the Guennol Collection has grown, so have the difficulties of the decision-making process involved in furthering this growth. We, the Guennol Collectors, in effect, have come to share some of the native disregard for absolutes: just as the “native American” concept of art has taken on a quite different sense—less narrowly defined and certainly more generous in outlook—our own interest and fascination with the vast range of man’s fertile imagination and visual expression have likewise expanded. We are not interested in the “what is art?” debate, nor in art-for-art’s sake, nor even in the contentious argument “anything is art if I say it is.” While we do not deny aesthetic priorities, we feel that objects produced by the mind and hand of man have a valid and often unrecognized place in the art world, if only out of regard for the role that they once held in their own culture. Often that role provided an emotional reaction similar to our own upon viewing a significant or—to employ a term treasured on the Western art scene—“important” object in contemporary life.

We have, therefore, elected to include the next six objects—the wooden altar effigy, the Kachina doll, the bear and badger paws, and the two flint nodules—in this volume. Their aesthetic qualifications may not be obvious to some eyes. They might be eliminated from a more formal art collection, but, in the context of their own world they suggest eligibility here. We are certain that they possess a significance beyond our own ability to define one; they have also given us an introduction and an insight into a world we little knew. This has, in turn, allowed us to expand—vastly—our understanding of the artistic life of other peoples whose works are included in the collection.

In addition, they have given us a great deal of enjoyment and pleasure. We like them and feel that they are entirely at home in the company of our other slices of eternity. The altar effigy has an aura of greatness; the paws are truly magnificent; and we apologize to no one for including the powerful flint animals on our list of treasures. Their maker was divine, but the eye that first honored them was Indian!

Perhaps we read into these works more than is there. For us, the Southwest is a place of magic. The natives that live in this area have been painted on a gaudy and sentimental canvas, but they are a people who see beauty as clearly, or even more clearly, than we.

My little breath, under the willows by the water
side we used to sit.
And there the yellow cottonwood bird came and sang.
That I remember and therefore I weep.
Under the growing corn we used to sit,

And there the leaf bird came and sang.
That I remember and therefore I weep.

This fragment of a love song comes from the California village of Santa Clara! Perhaps our six pieces share this same beauty.

A. B. M.

Wooden Altar Effigy

The variety of wooden effigies among the Pueblo Indian tribes is vast. Many of the figurines are extremely conventional in form and reflect only abstractly the actual appearance of the original; others, particularly those from recent years, are realistically carved and ornamented. Of the modern figures the most familiar are those in cottonwood, wrongly called "dolls," representing the various kachina (*katsina*, in Rio Grande Pueblo usage) spirit beings who appear from time to time in the villages. Others, equally numerous but less elaborately costumed, are carved and painted for altars set up by the Pueblo medicine societies.

Some of these altar effigies are invoked to bringing rain; others serve the purposes of the particular society, including war, social functions, such as funerals, and witchcraft, but most are connected with curing illness. Some of the figures, which may be as small as three to four inches, are most commonly regarded as fetishes, while others range in height from twenty-four inches to forty inches. They are decorated appropriately and installed with the textile or wooden altar back. They sit with the people during the ceremony, listening to their prayers, and add their inner power to the efficacy of the curing ritual. They are not worshiped as gods; rather, they act as intermediaries. They are also regarded as messengers, transmitting the prayers of the priests to the deities, or as physical reminders of the presence of invisible spirits summoned to help the sick person. As such, they are important parts of the ceremony, and the altar is incomplete without them.

One such example is the Guennol effigy, a cylindrical cottonwood carving cut at right angles across the top and bottom. The upper section consists of a head, carved with rounded chin; a somewhat cylindrical slotted mouth is inserted in the lower center and the narrow triangular eyes are painted black. At one time a cluster of hawk and eagle feathers was attached to the crown of the head, but most of this



*Wooden
Altar
Effigy*

ornamentation has worn away, leaving only sections of the plumes. The figurine is cut away from beneath the forearms and hands, which are held horizontally (in common with the typical Pueblo effigy style). The lower section of the body is cut with an inverted V to provide balance to the form. Red ocher paint, much of which remains, was rubbed over the entire surface of the head and body; white pigment was applied to

the lower surface of the body, but only traces of this can now be seen. Beads of drilled shell disks were placed around the neck.

It is impossible to identify this effigy with certainty as Zuñi; carvings identical in form and size are also found in several other southern Rio Grande villages. It would be necessary to see the Guennol example in use or to know the carver in order to establish its provenance, as well as identify precisely which being the effigy represents. Masewi, Uyuyewi, Kapíshtaya, and Paiyákyamu are the spirit beings most commonly portrayed in this manner; it seems likely that the effigy is one of these four.

Although, at first glance, such effigies appear primitive in concept, a more careful viewing conveys to us a remarkable sense of serenity—precisely one of the primary purposes of the carving in the first place.

F.J.D.

WOODEN ALTAR EFFIGY

Cottonwood

Height, 16½ inches

Zuñi(?) Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1900–35

Kachina Doll

Hopi kachina “dolls” as we know them today first appeared in the late 1800s. They evolved from the altar deities, which were used exclusively inside kivas on the mesas. The purpose of the dolls was as a teaching device for the children, yet they were used neither as toys nor as altar objects. The kachina is one of the few three-dimensional sculptured objects among the arts of the Southwestern Indians and this, combined with their unique polychromed painted design, has made them highly collectible.

The Guennol kachina is an example of the Sio Shalako doll, introduced by the Zuñis.

J.P.C.

KACHINA DOLL

Wood

Height, without feathers, 11 inches

Hopi Pueblo; Arizona, about 1880–90

EX COLL.: John Collier; Mr. and Mrs. Stark, Tucson and Utah; Christopher Selser; Carr Gallery, Santa Fe.



*Kachina
Doll*

Bear and Badger Paws

Portions of the anatomy of various local animals—the claws, hide, teeth, horns, antlers, feathers, or other even larger parts of the body—were important religious objects common to most of the Pueblo peoples. All of these had a direct bearing, in one way or another, upon the relationship between animal and man, influencing the role of

guardian performed by the spirit beings and the importance of summoning, propitiating, or personifying them in religious ceremonies. It is not possible to catalogue precisely every part of the body used, nor, indeed, to qualify their exact functions, since these varied from one individual to another.

However, some anatomical parts traditionally have become accepted over the years as having specific powers and are included in the “medicine kit” of almost every doctor (*tcaiañi*). Depending upon the animal—as well as on the society and the ritual—the function of the anatomical part may be related to the guardianship of a person or a shrine, warfare, control of the elements, resisting witchcraft, or curing illness. The latter is by far the most common, and it is probably in this context that the Guennol medicine paws were employed. These are cut from a ceremonially killed animal from which the flesh is then scraped out, or the paws are left where ants and other insects can clean them; once cleansed, they are dried and ritually purified.

The bear paw in the Guennol Collection granted the *tcaiañi* the powers of the bear (usually the black bear, *Ursus americanus*), regarded as a forceful and wise guardian spirit. To increase the powers, various decorations were added as an offering to the spirit of the animal, both to make the object more attractive and thereby increase its efficacy and to gain the potency inherent in the colorful ornaments themselves.

The paws were worn by the *tcaiañi* of a particular medicine society to cleanse, purify, and cure the patient; the doctor slipped the paws over his own forearms, mimicked the growling sounds of the bear (*kôhaiya*), and imitated its movements, stroking the patient’s body to draw away the sickness, gesturing to bring the medicine powers into the person, or waving violently to ward off the invisible attacks of the witches who introduced the illness. During an initiation ritual the society members and their leaders sometimes simulated an attack upon the proselyte, pawing him to bring the medicine power into his body and to cleanse him for membership. The paws were used over and over again until they literally wore out; then they were discarded and a new pair secured. When not in use they were stored and carefully guarded, lest witches drain their power. Usually they were buried with the owner at his death.

The decoration on the Guennol bear paw (*kêhaiya*) comprises a great number of beads and pendants; these include turquoise, shell, and glass trade beads as well as several plastic beads and pendants—demonstrating the indifference of the Indians to the use in religious ceremonies of objects manufactured by white men.

The Guennol badger paw is similar in almost every sense to that of the bear. The badger (*dyúpi*, the familiar *Taxidea taxus* common throughout the Southwest) is held in particular regard because of his underground home, which is related to the *shipap* (or underworld opening), whence came all Pueblo people. The impressive manner in which the badger rips its way into the earth with its powerful forepaws must also have been influential in the original selection of the animal as a guard-



Bear Paw



Badger Paw

ian spirit being. This paw has also been decorated with many strands of beads—especially turquoise, shell, and coral—and pendants. Of particular interest is the small bivalve inlaid with turquoise and jet mosaic.

F.J.D.

BEAR PAW (KEHAIYA)

Length, $10\frac{3}{16}$ inches

BADGER PAW (DYUPI)

Length, $8\frac{3}{16}$ inches

Santo Domingo Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1890–1925(?)

Reddish Brown Flint Nodules

Found objects that are regarded, unaltered, as naturally formed specimens carry the designation of *naturfacts*, meaning “nature-made,” to distinguish them from artifacts, man-made objects. Just as the contemporary white man will pick up a strange or intriguing natural object and muse on its similarity to a known manufactured object, or fantasize on far-away cloud formations or the seeming likeness of the flickering shadows of a fire in the hearth to a familiar form, so did the native American when he viewed the creative artistry of nature. If he could perceive a seeming parallel to the already familiar anthropomorphic or zoöomorphic forms, he would often esteem the object as divinely bestowed and endowed with certain beneficial qualities. Whether or not the object was altered by the finder, the feeling was that here—fashioned in the spirits—was an even more important representative of the “other world” than a stone or wood creation by man. Therefore, the spirit creation necessarily enjoyed more respect, reverence, and awe, since it possessed greater power and/or religious qualities than anything man could produce. When such an object was found it was always taken as an indication of divine favor.

Unfortunately, the noninitiated readily confuse the purposeful use of these objects, and the number of natural concretions in collections that have been regarded as having “Indian use” are legion. This is particularly true of those exotically shaped stones that suggest a resem-

blance to human facial features or animal forms, although arrowheads and other projectiles also fall within this category. Nature is a skilled producer of astonishing “replicas” of man-made implements.

Two stone nodules of this type, acquired in 1978 by the Guennol Collection, are excellent manifestations of this phenomenon. They are most impressive in appearance: the smaller one, highly suggestive of a frog, has a surprisingly natural look; the raised deposits logically resemble protruding eyes, and the overall “lump” also bears a resemblance to the shape generally found among such aquatic creatures. The larger stone, slightly less reminiscent of a turtle, is nevertheless equally impressive as a natural form. Both of these could very well have been gathered by someone for use as charms, fetishes, or religious objects. Their role would have been somewhat similar to that of the “lucky stone” familiar to most readers, although usually there is a more secular feeling toward such objects when they are put to contemporary non-Indian usage; their religious qualities are not commonly present. It has been suggested that the chipped section at one end of the larger stone resulted from the “killing” of the stone before disposal. This might be, although it seems more likely the result of careless handling.

The “pick-it-up-and-use-it” function of these nodules should not detract from their beauty. They are indeed impressive, and, given the animistic nature of ancient religious beliefs, it is not surprising to find

*Reddish Brown
Flint Nodules*



such objects included in medicine bundles. In the present context, however, they present a problem; the effort is to demonstrate the hand of man at work creating beauty, rather than the perceptive eye passively finding beauty in nature. This latter approach is a quite different aesthetic force—and a further caveat is the ease with which “real” can be substituted for “maybe.”

F.J.D.

REDDISH BROWN FLINT NODULES

Large stone: height, 8 inches; width, 8½ inches

Small stone: height, 6 inches; width, 7½ inches

PROVENANCE: Casas Grandes site (“Paquime” ruin), Chihuahua, Mexico.

EX COLL.: Paul L. Howell, El Paso.

EXHIBITED: Museo de San Elizario, Texas, 1969–76.

Black-on-White Pottery Quail Effigy

One of the most interesting aspects of the archaeology of the southwestern United States is the ever present interaction of the native cultures. This influence is most noticeable in the artifacts produced by the Indians of the Southwest and is still evident today among the Pueblo potters of New Mexico. This interchange of thought and design can result from intermarriage, a trading expedition to a distant trade center, or simply the geographical reality of one expanding culture encroaching on the traditional territory of another. The present-day expansion of the Navajo into land long occupied by the Hopi people of Arizona is one instance of the latter phenomenon.

The delicate black-on-white clay quail effigy in the Guennol Collection is an excellent example of one culture influencing the art of a neighboring people. Although this quail was found in a Mimbres site and was made by a Mimbres potter, the dark brown and black geometric designs on a white slip are quite clearly from the Casas Grandes culture. The Mimbres inhabited a small number of villages in southwestern New Mexico from approximately 1000 to 1250 A.D. The villages were located along the Mimbres River in the mountainous northern part of New Mexico and spread southward across what is now the



*Black-on-White
Pottery Quail
Effigy*

border of that state and the state of Chihuahua in the northern Sonoran desert of Old Mexico.

It is not clear to what extent the Mimbres may have influenced the Casas Grandes culture. However, each of these neighboring peoples created its own beautiful and sophisticated style of pottery that has found its way into museum collections both in America and abroad.

J.P.C.

BLACK-ON-WHITE POTTERY QUAIL EFFIGY

Height, 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ inches; length, 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ inches

Mogollon (Mimbres); Southwestern United States, about 1000–1400

Ex COLL.: Harvey Mudd, Santa Fe.

Hohokam Stone Vessel

The art history of the American Southwest is recorded primarily in its vessels, for every culture in the region experimented with different shapes and decorative techniques. The most common materials were clay and paint, but the Hohokam, who inhabited the desert of southern Arizona from the first to the thirteenth centuries A.D., developed two distinctive types of stone vessel: shallow dishes (known as palettes) and small bowls. Decorated with figures of animals or humans, these stone containers testify to the Hohokam artists' skill at carving in low relief as well as in the round.

A large bird with compactly folded wings is represented on one side of the Guennol Hohokam bowl. The piece is exceptional in that the bird dominates the bowl; usually the human and animal motifs are subordinate to the vessel form. Typical of the Hohokam, however, is the vigorous carving style and the emphasis on mass. As the receptacle of the bowl is very shallow, both bird and bowl are equally solid, carved from a single piece of dense, mottled stone.

The bird is in good condition, but pieces are missing from the sides of the bowl, and dark shiny patches on the surface indicate that it has been burned as well as broken. Hohokam objects buried in special caches almost always show signs of damage by force and fire. In this way the art of the past was not only hidden from view, but significantly altered. This apparently destructive measure was actually a mark of respect, analogous to the way in which the Hohokam treated the dead.

The Hohokam practice of cremation sets them apart from the other major prehistoric cultures of the Southwest, as do a number of other traits. Confined to the desert valleys, the Hohokam were the only native North Americans to develop a major system of canal irrigation. They built countless ball courts and temple mounds and invented a method of etching designs on shells imported from the coast. While these activities indicate a technically and artistically inventive people, they also demonstrate a relationship with Mexican civilization to the south. It is clear, however, that the stone vessels were a local development: plain palettes and bowls precede the elaborately carved Hohokam examples and many of the subjects depicted, such as the Gila monster and the rattlesnake, are native to the Arizona desert.

The bird on this vessel is probably a vulture, a familiar character in North American Indian mythology. The head and neck are smooth and small in relation to the rest of the body, indicating the bird's bald head. Details of the claws and the feathers of the wings are rendered by bold incisions in which the successive strokes of the stone tools are plainly visible.

The contrast of sharp angles and rounded forms, especially evi-



*Hohokam
Stone
Vessel*

dent in the bird's silhouette, creates a sense of suppressed energy. The vulture appears to strain to keep the dish within his grasp. This dynamic quality is characteristic of the Hohokam style between 500 and 1200 A.D., the period in which the Hohokam culture reached its greatest artistic development.

Caches of one or more bowls buried together are also characteristic of this period and raise interesting questions about the role of carved vessels in Hohokam life. This bowl was buried with at least one other piece; it was found near the Cashion site along with a stone effigy vessel in the form of a mountain ram.¹ One cache at Snaketown, Arizona, the largest Hohokam site, contained fifty vessels ranging from plain to elaborately carved examples, all smashed before burial, suggesting that, while the bowls are small and seemingly personal, they may have played a part in communal rituals.

The special manner of burying the vessels makes it clear that they were privileged objects but unfortunately there are no other clues to their function. The flat dishes closely related to them in iconography and style have been found in burials, sometimes with remains of pigment in them. Archaeologists have concluded, therefore, that the dishes were special containers for body paint, used in mortuary rites. The stone bowls are more enigmatic. Various terms have been used for them: censers, paint cups, or medicine bowls in the literature, few show any signs of use. It is possible that they were medicine bowls because of the small size of the cavity and because of the subjects depicted on them. The Guennol example is especially interesting in this regard. The Pima Indians who live in the territory once occupied by the Hohokam consider the vulture

the cause of certain diseases. As is often the case in native American medical practice, the cause is also the cure: the wing feathers of the vulture are used in preventive medicine. If the Hohokam had had similar ideas about the vulture, this vessel may have belonged to a medical specialist who used it to counteract the vulture's malevolent influence.

D.F.

HOHOKAM STONE VESSEL

Height, $2\frac{7}{8}$ inches; length, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches; diameter of cavity, $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches

Hohokam culture; Arizona, 200–1200 A.D.

PROVENANCE: Excavated near the Cashion site.

NOTE

1. Evan M. Maurer, *The Native American Heritage*, The Art Institute of Chicago, 1977, no. 293, ill.

Matte-finish Blackware Bowl *by María and Julián Martínez*

One of the foremost developments in ceramics in the American Southwest was the matte-finish blackware bowl, of which the Guennol piece is a prime example. There has been a great deal of misunderstanding and much romanticism attached to this particular style of pottery, which caught the fancy of non-Indians in the early twentieth century and became a major obsession of collectors and dealers. The black finish was not a new invention, as some believed; rather, the diligence of two unusual artists in San Ildefonso Pueblo, New Mexico, sparked a remarkable revival of a prehistoric ware, which they brought to a high point of perfection. The intriguing feature of this renaissance is that it was the serendipitous result of a long experiment involving deliberate efforts to perfect a different type of ware. As early as 1910, Julián Martínez—an accomplished Pueblo artist whose paintings were appreciated even then, and are now eagerly sought after—and his wife, María Tafoya Martínez—recognized as perhaps the outstanding potter of her village—worked together to perfect pottery production. The couple was inspired by prehistoric sherds found in 1906 during the archaeological excavations of Edgar Lee Hewett, then director of the



*Matte-finish
Blackware Bowl*

Museum of New Mexico. Encouraged by him, they continued their efforts, which culminated, about 1918 or 1919, in a successful ware.

This pottery resembles other Pueblo ceramics in shape and style; it is formed by the coil technique, then polished to a firm, hard surface. The design is painted upon the exterior with a liquid solution called *guaco*, the juice of the Rocky Mountain beeweed (*Cleome serrulata*), after which the vessel is allowed to dry completely; it is then fired in the usual out-of-doors manner. What makes the pottery different is the treatment in a reduction atmosphere: it is smothered after firing. This prevents smoke from escaping, thereby forcing carbon deep into the red-hot clay, resulting in a heavy black residue on the surface. The vessel is wiped with a rag after it cools, and the design emerges in matte finish, in strong contrast to the high luster of the vessel itself.

Until his death in 1943, Julián painted the decorative designs on the bowls, plates, pitchers, and so-called wedding jars formed by his wife. While most of the ceramics were increasingly executed in blackware, the couple continued to produce some polychrome ware. After 1943, María worked with her daughter-in-law Santana, and the two were a team for many years. Eventually María's son Popovi Da took his father's place as decorator of the wares, occasionally assisted by his son Tony.

María virtually ceased producing pottery by about 1960, largely because her eyesight was failing, although she continued to make a bowl from time to time.

Signatures on “María pottery”—as it has become almost universally known—present a confusing problem. In the early years, none was signed. With the combined pressures of the museum director Hewett, Kenneth Chapman, and Odd Halseth, the practice of signing pottery became more frequent, until it was a matter of course. Unfortunately, the Pueblo tradition of communal cooperation dictated a practice that, however generous and helpful, tended to confuse an otherwise clean record: María would sign any pottery that was brought to her. A large proportion of the so-called signed, genuine María wares seen today are actually made by other Pueblo women, and, more regrettably, the high-priced market has also given birth to many forged signatures.

Aside from Nampeyó, a well-known Hopi-Tewa artist, no single craftsman has been as dramatic nor as important in the development of the pottery of the Southwest as have Julián and María Martínez. Recognition of their artistry certainly came to them over the course of their lives, justifiably and deservedly; but perhaps their greatest rewards have been the revival-in-strength, the great individuality, and the realization of their work, and the beneficial influence this has had on their own people.

The Guennol bowl is a fine example of the style of Martínez pottery produced in the early 1940s, shortly before Julián’s death. It is in the most popular and familiar of all of the Martínez designs, the “feathered circle,” which is found in many sizes but is always the same in form. Other popular designs were the Avanyu (or “plumed serpent”), and a wide variety of rich geometric motifs; in continuing these latter designs, Popovi Da and his son Tony have made significant contributions to pottery decoration.

F.J.D.

MATTE-FINISH BLACKWARE BOWL
by María and Julián Martínez

Signed on base: *María and Julián*

Diameter, 9 inches

San Ildefonso Pueblo; New Mexico, about 1940

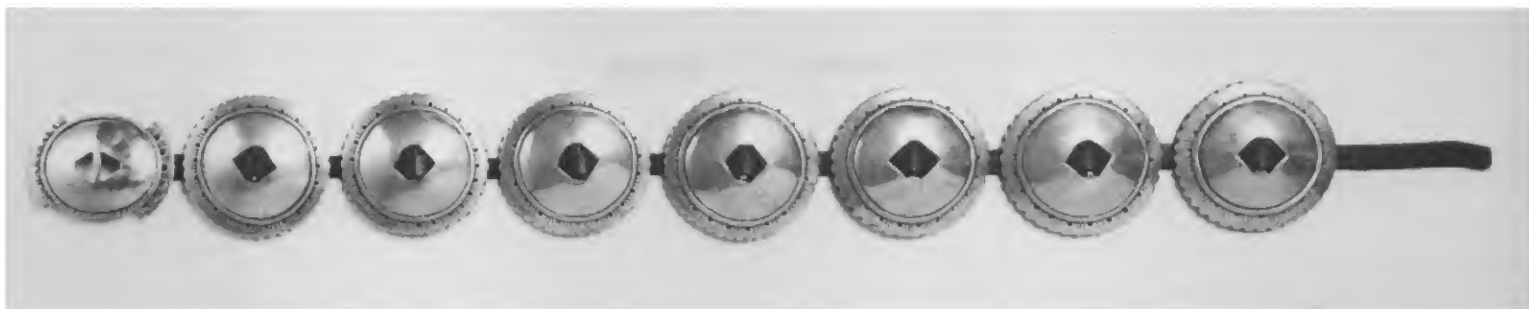
EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 20.

Two Hammered Silver Belts

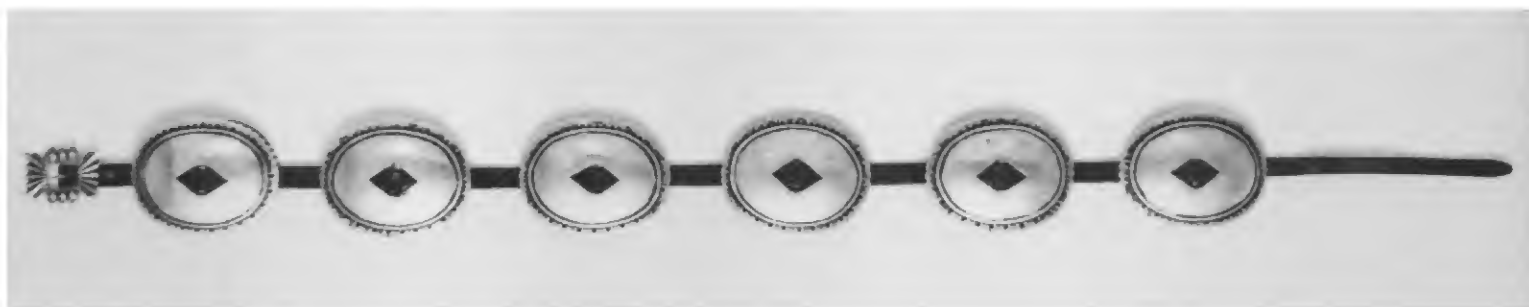
Silver ornaments became the most important part of the Navajo costume from the time of the introduction of the art, about 1853, to the present. Probably no other single object was as important as the belt, or *sis*, of round or oval disks called *conchas* (from Spanish *concha*, “shell,” a reference to their scalloped rim, or *atlá sinili* in Navajo), which became a key part of every person’s dress. The origin of these disks is a matter of controversy; some scholars claim that they stem from the Plains Indians’ use of German silver disk ornaments; others believe that their origin lies in Mexican costume ornament of the period. Whatever the precise background of this colorful adornment, it has become distinctly identifiable as Navajo art, and is today a popular sports-clothes accessory worn by white people as much as it is part of Indian clothing.

The earliest form of the *concha* was a circular disk of thin metal, without scallops, or with very slight indented cuts around the rim; these were hammered incised lines created by a file, chisel, or engraving tool, with two triangular perforations facing each other in the center, through which the belt was laced. A later development was the oval *concha*, which may have resulted from the desire for a more powerful visual effect, without increasing the total number of disks making up the belt. The art of soldering made possible the closing of the center openings, as well as the addition of decorative elements—usually of raised wire—on the faces of the disks. This type of *concha* was attached to the belt by means of circular or elongated loops, usually of copper, soldered to the back; the leather belt was threaded through these loops. Alternate decorative elements around the rim or in the center of the disks were usually achieved by hammering the surface with steel dies—a technique that originated with Mexican saddlemakers’ stamps.

The buckle, or *beelchididlo*, varies greatly in design, style, and size. Some fit well into the pattern of the *conchas*, while others seem not to harmonize with the design at all. One reason for this is that early buckles were simply iron harness fastenings. With the realization of their unattractive appearance and their tendency to rust, smiths began to make a more suitable fastener. Some were oval, a few were round, but most buckles were rectangular, the most practical shape. The early buckles were cut out in the center, with a middle bar to which one end of the belt was permanently fastened; a heavy wire tongue held the opposite end secure. Later these central sections were often soldered on the back, and some buckles had two heavy wires soldered at the ends to which the belt was fastened. After about 1890 some buckles were set with turquoise, but these are far less common than the plain



*Hammered Silver Belt
with Seven Circular Conchas*



*Hammered Silver Belt
with Six Oval Conchas*

heavy silver buckle (with heavy wear the turquoise settings tend to break or become lost). The dissimilarity of the buckle to the concha pattern is often the result of the not infrequent exchange and subsequent reassemblage of belts—including one of the Guennol examples.

The older Guennol belt, of about 1880–90, has seven perfectly circular disks with triangular cut-out sections in the center. This is the traditional design form, with a heavy wire ring soldered around the rim and the drilled-and-cut scalloped edge so typical of these conchas. The belt was obtained by Al Packard, about 1958, from a Navajo man in Lukachukai, Arizona. The buckle is of a much later period and less harmonious. Fortunately the Guennol collectors were able to locate an oval buckle completely in keeping with the design of the belt, in the collection of Don Hoel, and they acquired it in 1977; it now replaces the clearly inappropriate buckle, even though it does not date from quite as early as the conchas. A wire assemblage has been added to accommodate the fastening of the leather belt. The buckle measures two and nine-sixteenths by three and nine-sixteenths inches, which agrees well with the three-and-one-half-inch diameter of the original disks.

The second Guennol belt, consisting of six oval conchas and a rectangular silver buckle, is of a slightly later type, but it still reflects the early pattern. It has triangular perforations in the center of the disks for threading the belt, with a soldered wire ring and hammered embellishments on the surface. The two belts harmonize nicely since they are of heavy-weight metal in the old style that demonstrates the quiet dignity of Navajo silverwork.

One interesting feature of these belts was not only their importance as decorations but their practical value: one could readily slip off a concha to pay for a given article or pawn it for later redemption—or even replace it with another, possibly different design. It was not at all unusual in earlier times to see a person wearing a belt of conchas of varying sizes, shapes, and designs, gained by exchange, pawning, or gambling.

F.J.D.

TWO HAMMERED SILVER BELTS

Seven circular conchas: diameter of each, $3\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Navajo; New Mexico, about 1880–90

EX COLL.: Al Packard, Santa Fe.

Six oval conchas: length of each, $4\frac{1}{16}$ inches

Navajo; New Mexico, about 1880–1910

EX COLL.: Charles Gillian; Anthony Berlant, Santa Monica, California.

Feathered “Gift Basket”

Of all the artistic achievements of North American Indians, basketry is the crowning glory. Nowhere in the world was as great a variety—nor as remarkable an exercise of skill—demonstrated as in the fiber containers created by these people. The Pomo Indians of northern California attained the highest peak of perfection. Their ability to fashion local grasses into fine, tightly woven, and beautifully patterned baskets is legendary. While almost all other Indian tribes produced basketry of varying quality—including the work of outstanding artists such as Datsolali among the Washo, who displayed an individual flair—the general level of their work was not as remarkably skilled. Indeed, it seems as though every woman in the Pomo tribe shared the talent equally.

The range in shape, pattern, and size of Pomo basketry is almost limitless: from miniatures one-sixteenth of an inch in diameter, with designs incorporated into the microscopic weave, to huge, strongly built containers measuring over four feet across. Most of these are trays or bowls, but complex, sophisticated shapes are not unfamiliar to the

Pomo and many of these also included open-weave techniques, adding to the beauty of the baskets.

Perhaps the most remarkable products of these people are their prized “jewel baskets,” which incorporated bird feathers into the weaving as it progressed. Originally created for wealthy persons, as gifts to friends, lovers, or relatives—and, particularly, as a tribute to departed elders or as gifts of respect to the deceased—maximum effort was put into these lovely weavings. The Pomo practice of cremation dictated the disposal of personal effects in a crematory pyre, and countless

*Feathered
“Gift Basket”*



numbers of these beautiful baskets became intermixed with the ashes of the departed.

Called *épika* (*pika* means “basket”), the baskets vary in size from tiny, round examples one-half inch in diameter (yet fully covered with feathers in multicolor designs) to larger, shallow trays ranging from twelve to fourteen inches, also solidly feathered. The most valued of all were the so-called sun baskets, known as *tápika* (although this is not a strict translation). These were a solid red—from the feathers of the redheaded woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*). None of these elaborately and expensively decorated baskets was intended as a container; they were far too valuable and served solely as precious possessions or gifts—hence the names “jewel basket” or “gift basket.” Designs were most commonly in solid hues or in multicolor rings, stars, or broken patterns; these were also frequently further ornamented with beads and pendants tied to the surface with milkweed-fiber cordage.

The Guennol basket is exemplary of the “morning star” design, created with feathers from the iridescent green head of the mallard duck (*Anas boschas*), the yellow breast feathers of the meadowlark (*Sturnella magna*), combined with feathers from the red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*) to complete the design. Small black topknot plumes from the California valley quail (*Lophortyx californica*) have been inserted around the perimeter. Circular drilled beads from the clamshell (*Saxidomus nuttallii*) are fastened with a cord looping to the outer rim of the basket for additional decoration. These small white disk-shaped beads, called *kaia*, were a form of currency among the people, thereby increasing the value of the baskets, which were treasured throughout their short lives—even by those people to whom they were most familiar.

The Pomo was not the only tribe to weave feathered baskets. The technique was familiar to the Shasta, Yokuts, Yuki, Wappo, and related groups, but the Pomo became the best known for their skills and undoubtedly created the greatest number of feather weaves.

F.J.D.

FEATHERED “GIFT BASKET”

Diameter, 6 inches

Pomo; California, about 1880–1900

EX COLL.: Grace Nicholson, Pasadena; Mrs. M.V. Jones, Seattle; Tom Bahti, Tucson.

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1965.

Wooden Spoon

The use of a variety of carved wooden spoons and ladles was widespread among the Eastern Woodlands Indians; most of these implements were employed to serve the mush and stewed foods common to the several tribes. These spoons were normally used with large, shallow wooden bowls with rounded sides; the curved, rounded ends prevented the spoons from slipping down into the mush or stew.

No people developed this carving art as highly as did the Iroquois of New York and southern Canada. The zoöomorphic forms of the spoons, often created from maplewood burls—as is the Guennol example—are masterpieces of small sculpture. Birds, animals, and, occasionally, floral motifs are most frequently seen, but humans (engaged in such activities as reading, playing, drinking, or running) are also common. The careful polishing after carving—and the patina gained from long use—give these early works a beautiful, soft appearance. They are known to have been made in very early historic times, and it is equally certain that they existed prehistorically, although no finished specimens have survived.

The Guennol spoon is typical of the larger dippers. It is carved of one piece, with a well-proportioned animal head at the top of the handle—perhaps a wolf, although the animal is difficult to identify—that faces outward from the bowl. What is less common is that the eyes are formed by two black trade beads, held in place by tiny brass pins that form the pupils. Of equal interest is the unusual form of the bowl itself: a shield shape, convex in outline, with a smoothly rounded end. The origin of this motif is not clear; it may have derived from the colonial shield shape common at the time, but it was more likely inspired by the large pockets of European dress coats (small cloth or buckskin carrying pouches frequently followed this style). Another European touch is the heart-shaped carving on the back of the animal's head; this is not traditionally Indian, although it does commonly occur in Iroquois art. It probably was borrowed from the heart-shaped motifs of the religious art of the Catholic priests, who were active among the Iroquois people.

F.J.D.

WOODEN SPOON

Maple

Length, 10¼ inches

Iroquois; New York, about 1800–50



*Wooden
Spoon*

Grass Dance Whistle

The Grass Dance (*pezi wachipi* in the Dakota language) is common to all northern Plains tribes, although it originated with the Omaha—hence, the name Omaha Dance, by which it is also commonly known. According to tradition, the dance came to the Sioux from the Pawnee and was once an important religious dance confined to members of the Grass Society. The name derives from the grass symbol carried in the hands of the dancers, as well as from a section of braided grass representing scalps, fastened to the belts of the performers.

Apparently the ceremony dates back well into the seventeenth century. With the passage of time, the religious portion of the dance gave way to its more social aspects, and today, although the dance ritual has expanded tremendously, it no longer has other than very minor religious overtones. Even the costumes have changed radically. Whereas earlier the grass belt—the sole badge of office of the Grass Society—frequently was indispensable, today it is rarely seen; it has been supplanted by the feather cluster worn at the back (commonly called a bustle, or a “crow”). These elaborately worked ornaments are so colorful and dramatic that the mundane braided-grass symbol was abandoned. Other aspects of the ceremony that were also of major importance, such as the Drum Dance and the presentation of the pipe, today seem to have lost much of their critical roles in the performance—for performance it has now become—and a dramatic, colorful, and vibrant presentation it is. Many of these dances are among the most enjoyable activities of contemporary powwows held throughout the Plains area. The ornate feather-cluster bustles, arm rosettes, and headdresses, combined with the fast, precise footwork and body movement, all make the skillful dancing a remarkable demonstration of admirable muscular coordination and endurance.

One of the attractive accessories used in the Grass Dance is the elk whistle (*heliáka styotanka*), usually made from a small straight branch of ash or box elder, which can readily be hollowed out by means of a hot wire. The open end of the whistle is split, carved, and heated to work the “beak” mouthpiece open. The shaft is scraped smooth, polished, and often painted blue, although some are ocher or red. The lips of the mouth are painted red, and a split-quill reed is bound to the shaft with sinew to prevent it from being lost. Some have downy prayer-feather plumes tied to one end. The Guennol *pezi wachipi* is a perfect example of these beautiful instruments. It is carved of ash, with the parted crane mouth painted red, well polished, with a fine patina. It retains the split-quill sounder and original sinew binding, and has a drilled hole under the chin of the crane, with fragments of the thong that once held an eagle plume.

Musically, this is probably more accurately called a flageolet than a whistle, although it lacks the stem holes of the former. It is an open tube with a range of six- or eight-tone harmonics. There are two “whistle men” at Grass Dance performances: one of them sounds the instrument as a signal in the dance; the other may have a small leg-bone whistle, also called *síyotanka*. When the singers come to the end of the chorus, the leader blows his whistle, indicating a repetition which can tinue for several more rounds.

These whistles are also used to make courting calls, but this function is less widely understood. Although most courting flutes have several holes in the stem to allow a wider range of musical tones, the Grass Dance whistle enjoys just as regular a use with young men, who station themselves near the tepees of their sweethearts and play upon the instrument. The recognized signal “calls her out,” if she is willing, and the couple retires to a nearby secluded spot.

Apparently, the Grass Dance was also an honor dance to give public recognition to a warrior who had served nobly in defense of his war party or of the village, or to a man who acted bravely under fire when his own life was in danger. It was never regarded lightly. Certainly, much of its popularity today is related to the social function it serves; it is again used to honor friends, family, guests, and important persons.

F.J.D.

GRASS DANCE WHISTLE

Attributed to Roan Bear

Length, 18¹/₁₆ inches

Dakota; South Dakota, about 1920 or earlier

EX COLL.: Roan Bear, Fort Thompson, South Dakota; Monroe Kiley (purchased 1940); Millard J. Holbrook II; Ashton Gallery, Scottsdale, Arizona.

Grass Dance Whistle



Zoöomorphic Pipe Bowl

The natives of the Northern Plains and the Great Lakes region made extensive use of a light-red, indurated clay, commonly called pipestone, found in southwestern Minnesota. It is soft when quarried, but hardens and turns darker colored when exposed to air. It was discovered by George Catlin in 1836; hence the name “catlinite” by which it is best known today. The quarry, regarded with reverence by the Indian people, was neutral ground; anyone could come in peace to obtain stone for carving. Originally sacred objects such as pipe bowls, tobacco dishes, and charms of varying forms were the primary items sculpted; later a range of products was created for sale to white tourists, including paperweights, symbolic pipes and tomahawks, paper knives, and a variety of knickknacks. In 1937, the quarry site was named a United States National Monument, but the Indians retained exclusive rights to mine the stone—a legal title that continues to be respected today.

The Guennol pipe bowl, once in the Pitt-Rivers Museum at Oxford University in England, is a well-formed animal—either a buffalo (as suggested by the hump) or a bear (as the animal has clearly defined paws)—in standing position. A large hole was drilled in the back to serve as a bowl for tobacco; in early days *kinnikinnik*, a mixture of bark, plant leaves, and native tobacco, was commonly smoked. A smaller hole was drilled at the rear for the insertion of a reed stem or the tapered cylindrical end of one of the various carefully worked wooden pipe-stems for which the Plains people were so famed. The two parts of the pipe were carried in a tobacco pouch or pipe bag when not in use, along with the tamper, tobacco, and a flint. There is no stem with this bowl, which has a well-worn patina suggesting considerable age.

The significance of the designs of these bowls cannot always be readily determined; many of them represent clan totems, vision beings (spirits that appear in dreams), or, perhaps, sacred guardians of the owner. To know precisely the importance of the less recognizable forms, and to identify them, one would have to know the owner of an object or the carver. A variety of zoöomorphic shapes, including the buffalo, bear, horse, duck, crane, and turtle, were perhaps the most commonly employed, as well as various designs based upon human figures. Often one man would own several pipe bowls, and these were customarily included in some medicine bundles.

Not all pipe bowls were as realistically carved as the Guennol example; most were simple L- or T-shaped cylinders, polished and drilled. Some were disk bowls, although this was less common. The form was designed to provide an efficient smoking instrument, while the elaborate decoration lavished upon many of the pipes made them important ritual objects.



*Zoöomorphic
Pipe Bowl*

Smoking was not a casual practice among Indian people. Knowledge of the tobacco plant was common in prehistoric times, and a wide variety of pipes was devised for smoking; the sculptural masterpieces of the Southeastern Indians are familiar to all connoisseurs of pre-Columbian art. It therefore seems reasonable to assume that even then this was a quasireligious custom that only increased with the importance of the need for spiritual aid. Smoking carried with it an element of supernatural communication; the rising and vanishing of the smoke into the atmosphere apparently had a profound effect upon the native people. Such Indian terms as “cloud blowers”—to identify pipes—are only one indication of this attitude. It has only been in recent times that the more recreational aspects of smoking have prevailed.

F.J.D.

ZOÖMORPHIC PIPE BOWL

Pipestone (catlinite clay)

Length, $3\frac{3}{16}$ inches

Sisseton Sioux tribe; Minnesota, about 1800–50

Ex COLL.: Pitt-Rivers Museum, Oxford, England.

Wooden Crest Frontlet

Several of the Northwest Coast Indians made use of carefully carved and decorated wooden head ornaments known by different names: depending upon the language, *amhalayt*, *yukwiwae*, or *shakayet*. These were usually relatively flat, slightly curved plaques of cedar, alder, or spruce, measuring between five by six and eight by nine inches. They were usually rectangular in shape, sometimes slightly scalloped, although oval and circular frontlets also appeared. The backs of these plaques were uniformly plain, relatively smooth surfaces; the fronts were ornately carved with high-relief designs, most often totemic, with a single major figure or facial features accompanied by one or more subsidiary figures. The designs tended to reflect the family crest or insignia of the owner, although many were related to historic or mythological events.

These plaques were among the most valuable possessions of the wealthier persons, perhaps only outranked by the copper *tinneh*, by the so-called Chilkat blanket, or by some of the more dramatic masks. They served somewhat as colorful “calling cards”; as with a European family crest, much of their value had to do with the identification of the owner and the importance of this individual and his relationship to prestige and power. Part may have depended upon the importance of the artist employed to provide the object, but much of the value was the high degree of decoration and the haliotis-shell inlay commonly applied to such objects.

In use, these frontlets were fastened to a cedar-bark or baleen coronet wrapped with swansdown and cloth; sometimes the more elaborate headdresses had a long cloth or hide trailer suspended down the back, to which ermine was attached. Many had sea-lion whiskers inserted in the top to provide an erect, waving decoration. The complete ceremonial costume usually included the headdress, a woven-textile body covering, and one of the “Chilkat” blankets, with perhaps an apron added. The full costume presented an imposing impression of wealth and power.

Frontlets were important not only for their appearance and value, but also as significant items in regional trade. Major chiefs commissioned artists to make them, and artists also carved them for general commercial purposes. As such, they were freely traded, not only within the tribe but also between tribes. As a result, they were scattered throughout the Pacific Coast area, so that it is impossible to attach a specific tribal identification to many of them, other than by style.

The Guennol frontlet is an aesthetic masterpiece, representative of the Golden Age of crest carving. Of red cedar, with black and red paint applied to the features for contrast, the frontlet has the bold design, careful balance, skillful carving, and colorful decoration of the

Lao-laxa dancer wearing Wooden Crest Frontlet. After Franz Boas, Report on the Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians, 1895, U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C., 1897, pl. 47.





*Wooden
Crest
Frontlet*

best of these objects, and is also a significant totemic design. Although a precise interpretation is somewhat uncertain, the design suggests the legend of the raven and the whale: the bird, emerging from—or being swallowed by—the whale, is above a spirit or human being. The animal has also been interpreted as a bear, but this seems very unlikely since none of its usual identifying features appear. The haliotis-rayed background, which emphasizes the value of the object, might represent the sun.

Because Wolfgang Paalen obtained the frontlet at Alert Bay, northern Vancouver, in 1939, from a Kwakiutl chief (see illustration), for many years it was regarded as Kwakiutl, from British Columbia. The frontlet is neither representative of Kwakiutl manufacture nor on the basis of its style and form is it Tsimshian, as some have thought. It is most likely Haida or Tlingit—a strictly subjective determination, since both tribes copied one another and were related culturally and linguistically. Judging from its general form, carving style, and design technique, the carver of this magnificent object was a Haida master. Not only did this tribe favor the squared form of such plaques and the heavy haliotis inlay, but the execution of the eyes and facial features matches the style of known Haida carvings.

The frontlet is of the type that would have been common from about 1850 on—when the Indians had become skilled with steel tools and were at the peak of their technical proficiency—until no later than 1875—when they began to provide carvings in rapid succession for the non-Indian market. The commercial carvings were technical masterworks, but they became fussy, displaying an increased technical virtuosity but a diminution of traditional vitality.

F.J.D.

WOODEN CREST FRONTLET

Height, 5½ inches; width, 7 inches

Kaigani Haida (?); Alaska, about 1850–75

PROVENANCE: Obtained from the Kwakiutl Indians at Alert Bay, northern Vancouver, British Columbia.

EX COLL.: Wolfgang Paalen (acquired from the Kwakiutl chief, 1939); Ralph C. Altman.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Franz Boas, *Report on the Social Organization and Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*, 1895, U.S. National Museum, Washington, D.C., 1897, pl. 47; Wolfgang Paalen, "Protem Art," *DYN, The Review of Modern Art*, 4/5, December 1943, p. 23; Miguel Covarrubias and D.F.R. de la Borbolla, *El Arte indígena de norteamérica*, Mexico City, 1945, p. 60; Robert Bruce Inverarity, *Art of the Northwest Coast Indians*, Berkeley, 1950, fig. 84; Miguel Covarrubias, *The Eagle, the Jaguar, and the Serpent*, New York, 1954, colorplate p. 89.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 11; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1952.

Wooden Clapper

Among the Indians of the Northwest Coast of North America the variety of musical instruments was particularly extensive. They range from whistles, flutes, reed “bugles,” and similar wind instruments, to drums, rattles, and related percussion implements, all of greatly varying sound quality. Their visual appeal is extraordinary, as is the skill that was involved in their creation. The Guennol example is a clapper-type of rattle called a *shisha* (also *sissah*), composed of two pieces of hollowed cedarwood fastened together at one end; the opposite end was left open to permit the performer to tap or snap the instrument, achieving a rhythmic clapping sound. The overall form of this *shisha* resembles a *hahko*, or “halibut,” whose open mouth is the sounding portion; the face of the spirit of the fish, which is carved in an oblique position, becomes the tail. Below the face is the handle of the clapper, with a ventral fin carved in low relief. The features and body of

Wooden
Clapper



the creature are indicated by hatching lines in black paint over red and turquoise detailing.

Although it has been suggested that this may be the work of Charles Edensaw (1839–1924), a Haida artist whose sculptural artistry in argillite is highly regarded, today there is no way to be certain of such an attribution. The temptation to attach well-known names to anonymous high-quality works of art must be approached with extreme caution in the field of native art, but in the present instance the excellent workmanship and style of carving support the attribution.

The clapper is said to have been collected in 1864, during a voyage of the H.M.S. *Gremler*, when Edensaw would have been about twenty-five years of age and actively producing objects of prime quality.

F.J.D.

WOODEN CLAPPER

Attributed to Charles Edensaw (Takayren)

Cedar

Width, 2¹/₁₆ inches; length, 9¹/₁₆ inches

Haida; British Columbia, about 1880–1900

EX COLL.: Beasley; John Wise, New York; Sotheby's, London, 1960.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 12; The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1961.

Speaker's Staff

by Willie Seaweed (Kwagitola)

I mportant chiefs, leaders, and shamans of most of the Northwest Coast Indian tribes, employed a special “speaker” (or *alax*, *alux*), whenever they had to address any gathering of their people—or, more particularly, when visiting chiefs or invited guests were present. The chief, or host, stood in front of the assembled group, attended by the *alax*, who held a long “speaking staff” (or *yákuntpek*) vertically before him. These usually were from five to ten feet in length, and were carved at the upper end with totemic designs indicating the rank, wealth, clan, and history of the chief. Some staffs had hollow sections into which pebbles were placed to provide a rattling noise. A *yákuntpek* was the badge of office of the *alax*, symbolizing not only the prestige,



*Speaker's
Staff*

status, and authority of the chief, but also certifying that the speaker was actually representing him. When a messenger bore an invitation or command, the staff was carried as a token of the authority of the herald. In this role, the *yákuntpek* recalls the European mace, signifying the power and authority of the ruler.

The chief would quietly tell the *alax* what he wanted to say; then the *alax*, who was chosen for his oratorical skill and dramatic talent, would deliver the message to the group. He would bend his knees slightly, providing visual as well as oral punctuation, at the same time striking the long staff, held vertically in front of him, against the floor—often heavily, causing a resounding thump, accompanied by a long rattling noise in the case of the hollowed-out staffs, to reverberate throughout the hall.

The delivery of the speech itself was formal, articulated rapidly, with a definite pause between each sentence. The *alax* repeated phrases over and over, as is common in most Indian oratory, and usually addressed someone directly by name, a particular feature of Northwest Coast Indian speakers. In other tribes, persons are not generally singled out in such a calculated manner, except for recognized, formal, honoring ceremonies.

The Guennol *yákuntpek* was carved by the well-known Kwakiutl artist Willie Seaweed (Kwagitola; 1873–1967) of Blunden Harbour, British Columbia. Its twenty-six-inch upper section is in the form of a seated frog, painted green with black eyes and spots on his body, holding a large sheet-copper *tinneh* in his webbed feet. He is supported by the carved figure of a human being, painted black with a red mouth—perhaps symbolic of the chief himself. Both are part of the long cylindrical pole, which has a nine-inch iron spike imbedded in the lower end. The symbolism suggests that this staff belonged to the chief of the Frog clan, who was an important and very wealthy (as attested by the *tinneh*) individual, well able to employ a leading artist to work on his behalf.

F.J.D.

SPEAKER'S STAFF
by Willie Seaweed (Kwagitola)

Length, 6 feet 3 inches

Kwakiutl; Blunden Harbour, British Columbia, about 1935–50

Siberian Ivory Pipe

Pipes made of walrus ivory from the Bering Strait area of Alaska are rare and unusual artifacts. Always ornamented with geometric and representational engravings or sculptured figures, they are especially intriguing because of their origin in an important historic event—the introduction of tobacco into Alaska from Siberia.

Tobacco is an indigenous American plant that was first imported to Europe in the mid-sixteenth century. Traveling eastward, it took almost two hundred years to reach the trading posts of Siberia, and became a commonly traded commodity in Alaska only in the early 1800s. The arrival of tobacco in Alaska made many changes in Eskimo life, not the least of which was the creation of new forms of art: ornamented tobacco bags of fur and skin; snuffboxes and quid boxes of wood, in animal and human form; decorated snuff tubes of ivory and bone; and, most extraordinary of all, exotic pipe souvenirs copied in ivory from the wooden pipes that came with the tobacco from Siberia.

Although both men and women chewed, sniffed, and smoked tobacco, smoking was predominantly a man's indulgence. The small pipe bowls of stone, ivory, or metal held only a tiny amount of tobacco, thus conserving a supply that did not keep pace with the demand until American traders arrived in Alaska after its purchase in 1867. The Eskimo smoker used tobacco as an intoxicant; that is, he tried to smoke all of the tobacco in one long draw, swallowing the smoke and becoming giddy or unconscious.

The kind of pipe most commonly used by early Eskimo smokers was made of two pieces of wood, measuring ten to twelve inches in length when lashed together with sinew or seal thong. This construction permitted the smoker to dismantle the pipe and salvage the nicotine residue for later use. The pipes were small, lightweight, and easy to carry from one seasonal camp to another. This is one of the reasons why it is doubtful that the Eskimos actually made large ivory pipes for their own use; because they were heavy, they were easily broken if stowed carelessly in the customary skin storage bags.

Most ivory pipes were diamond-shaped—sometimes hexagonal—in cross section, and were apparently copied from a wooden prototype that had developed in the area of Nome and Port Clarence. The earliest record of an Alaskan ivory pipe dates from between 1877 and 1881, when Edward William Nelson assembled a large and valuable collection of Eskimo artifacts for the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. In *The Eskimo about Bering Strait*, he wrote that the pipes were “not very numerous, but were seen at widely separated localities from the Yukon mouth northward through Bering strait in Kotzebue sound.”¹ The pipes that he bought came from St. Michael, where, according to W. J. Hoffman



Siberian Ivory Pipe

in 1895, they were “said to have been made for sale to traders.”² The only other ivory pipes collected—or even mentioned—in Alaska before the 1890s were two pipes purchased at Kotzebue Sound by Lieutenant George M. Stoney of the United States Navy sometime between 1883 and 1886. These two pipes, which were probably taken by Eskimo traders to Kotzebue Sound from St. Michael, since they are in the St. Michael style of carving, are now in the Smithsonian Institution.

The Chukchi carvers of Siberia made fancy wood-and-lead and ivory pipes as souvenirs as early as 1848, according to Lieutenant W.H. Hooper of the *Plover*, one of the vessels searching the Arctic for Sir John Franklin’s ships, *Erebus* and *Terror*, which were last seen in Baffin Bay, Canada, in July 1845. (The Chukchi and the Siberian Eskimos lived on the east coast of Siberia and shared many cultural traits; consequently, some of their artifacts are similar.)

Hooper wrote that the Chukchi men who visited the *Plover* at Emma Harbor, Siberia, during the winter of 1848–49, carved numerous souvenirs. One man “was in great request as a maker and ornamentor of wooden pipes, particularly for inlaying them with lead or solder, which after our arrival was practised to a much greater extent than previously.”³ Another made Hooper an ivory pipe in only six hours. Although it was probably a copy of an English-style pipe—a large bowl and short thin stem—his description of the artwork matches the Chukchi style that prevailed up to the first decade of the twentieth century. The pipe, wrote Hooper, “had on the bowl a face in front and on either side, the back was filled up by a figure less than an inch high seated upon a block, having one leg crossed upon the knee of the other.”⁴ This certainly describes the large round European pipe bowl, which was sometimes used on the Eskimo-style souvenir pipe.

Despite Hooper's observation, few ivory pipes in Eskimo style have been collected in Siberia. Furthermore, some of the "Chukchi" pipes in Russian museums are suspected by Soviet ethnographers of having been made by the Eskimos of St. Lawrence or Little Diomed Islands. Yet about the time of the Nome gold rush (about 1898–1907), the Siberian carvers of East Cape (Cape Dezhnev), only sixty miles across the Bering Strait from Alaska, were turning out many ivory souvenirs—pipes, boats, sleds, dogs, reindeer, bears, people in action poses—some of which were in the small and detailed sculptural style of the Guennol pipe.

This pipe, however, may well be unique. Its slender shape, absence of graphic designs, and distinctive delicate sculpture are unlike Alaskan pipes. Alaskan pipe makers usually utilized the thickest tusks available for engravings, and made their sculpture fairly large and simple.

The provenance and date of an object containing representational engravings or sculpture can often be ascertained from the subject matter. The sleds and the reindeer pulling them, and the dress of one of the dancers indicate that this pipe is Siberian rather than Alaskan. Baggy pants worn to the knee were typically Chukchi, and reindeer were used as draft animals only by the so-called Reindeer Chukchi before 1892. In that year, however, the first domesticated reindeer were successfully imported from Siberia into Alaska, and some Alaskan Eskimo carvers subsequently used them as subject matter, but with a different style of sled.

D.J.R.

SIBERIAN IVORY PIPE

Length, 14 inches

Eskimo; Siberia, late 19th century

NOTES

1. E.W. Nelson, *The Eskimo about Bering Strait*, Washington, D.C., 1899, p. 281.
2. W.J. Hoffman, "The Graphic Art of the Eskimos," *USNM Annual Report for 1895*, Washington, D.C., 1897, p. 854.
3. W.H. Hooper, *Ten Months among the Tents of the Tuski*, London, 1853, p. 184.
4. Ibid.

Engraved Ivory Cribbage Board

The influx of settlers and speculators, trappers and tourists, and prospectors and prostitutes from the “Lower Forty-eight” into Alaska in the nineteenth century had an overwhelming effect upon the region and its culture patterns. One of the ancient art forms in Alaska was small-scale sculpture, most often of ivory of walrus, whale, and seals. This tradition has continued without interruption from prehistoric times to the present, although occasional changes have occurred in direction and in the quantity of art produced. Native skills were strong and vibrant, quick to respond to any demand made upon them, and sculpture became the perfect craft to serve these transient interests. Artists tended to devote considerable care to carving small and readily transportable ivories, and the value of the precious substance gave the art a lasting importance.

One of the true “souvenirs” was the cribbage board, usually carved from a single walrus tusk. Since Eskimos never played cribbage, this is one item that was made solely for “foreign” consumption. Hundreds of these cleanly executed designs were produced, from Nome to Seattle, with varying motifs. They frequently included local scenes, landscape, and the flora and fauna and topography of the region—even maps of the coastline are known—all provided with the necessary drilled “crib” for the counting pegs (also generally of ivory) that were used in the game.

While some purists object to the strong alien influence that is so evident in this art, the tusks are nevertheless representative of native artistry, for there were usually no restrictions placed on design. The artist could portray whatever he desired, and most of the designs were executed in the free-line engraving, etching, or incising techniques that were characteristic of Eskimo art of the period. These processes were accomplished with the use of needles, sharp-pointed steel or iron nails, or knives. Some tusks were also elaborately carved in the round, but these are far less common.

One of the leading masters at the end of the last century was a celebrated artist from Aiacheruk (near Cape Nome) named Angokwazhuk—more familiarly known as “Happy Jack” because of his cheerful disposition. He was brought south from Little Diomed Islands, and he subsequently traveled widely and became well acquainted with the cultural patterns of the white man. Semicrippled as a result of the amputation of part of his foot, he turned to carving full time and proved to be a remarkably innovative and skilled artist whose work quickly became eagerly sought after by collectors and dealers. His influence upon other carvers was tremendous; he may have been primarily responsible for the introduction of carved walrus-tusk cribbage boards, and he



Engraved Ivory Cribbage Board: front and back views



*Detail of
Engraved Ivory
Cribbage Board:
portrait of
Emma Moser*



is certainly the earliest known carver to make the now widespread clown figure of the billikin. At the time of his death, at the age of forty-five, during the influenza epidemic of 1918, he had become known as an outgoing, gregarious, and friendly individual—and a master craftsman.

The Guennol cribbage board, recognized as Angokwazhuk's work, has the rare distinction of also being an identifiable portrait piece. The three separate portraits are of Charles Moser, who emigrated to Alaska during the gold rush; his wife, Isabelle; and their daughter, Emma. The carving was made, according to the inscription, "for Mr. Moser," about 1900. Whether it was actually commissioned by him, or intended as a gift for him, is uncertain, but it is characteristic of the form and style of almost all of these cribbage boards—although very few have the remarkable photographic accuracy that typifies the work of Angokwazhuk. Its historic interest only adds to the vitality of the portraits, since rarely can the actual identity of such portraiture be established—and even less frequently are such works also aesthetically superior objects. The Guennol carving combines all of these qualities.

F.J.D.

ENGRAVED IVORY CRIBBAGE BOARD

Attributed to Angokwazhuk ("Happy Jack")

Width, 3 inches; length, 23 inches

Kaviagmiut Eskimo; Alaska, about 1900

EX COLL.: Charles Moser, Alaska; Mrs. Fred Young (Moser's granddaughter), Seattle.

Wooden Death Image

One of the many religious denominations in the United States that still survives from earlier times is a small, little-known sect of Hispanic Catholic lay worshipers who inhabit a dozen or so scattered, isolated villages in the region of western New Mexico and southwestern Colorado, extending as far south as the Upper Rio Grande Valley. Calling themselves Los Hermanos Penitentes—but more commonly known as the Penitentes—they follow rituals that apparently have their distant origins in the early thirteenth century.

The Penitentes seem to be descended from the Third Order of Saint Francis de la Luz, established in 1218—one of several branches of the Order of Saint Francis of Assisi, founded in 1210—to provide lay workers with a place in the church organization. During the later Middle Ages, many of the more emotional groups of worshipers adopted extreme forms of devotion, including self-flagellation, physical mortification, and absolute sacrifice. In time the customs became so immoderate that they were abolished in Europe; in the Americas the rites continued for a period longer, but eventually they were outlawed here also.

Only in Mexico, apparently, did the customs survive. Some scholars believe that the traditions completely died out, but that a lingering extremism, born of emotional devotion, was nurtured by the total isolation of life in the tiny villages of the Southwest, giving rise to a rebirth of earlier practices. Certainly, Juan de Oñate found religious excesses in the Upper Rio Grande when he explored that area of New Mexico in 1598, and made several efforts to stamp them out, but the zeal of the devotees overcame his censure. Other clergy frequently issued orders banning mortification, but their references to it over the succeeding three centuries make it quite clear that it persisted as a problem for the church.

In fact, it was prevalent enough in the late nineteenth century to engender friction between Anglo- and Hispanic-Americans. This, com-



*Wooden
Death
Image*

bined with the Protestant enthusiasm for witch hunting (in itself a form of emotional excess and bigotry), resulted in Penitente hunts. Young Protestants and Catholics alike, usually during Lent, sought practitioners to harry. Rumors flew faster than fact: stories of people being flogged to death, or crucified on the cross with nails and left to starve to death, and tales of sexual excesses were all popular fodder in New Mexico. Although most of these rumors were spread verbally, published tracts and books contained lurid accounts of Penitential orgies. Most of these feelings

were supported by the anti-Catholicism of the time, and strengthened by racial discrimination against Hispanos and the tendency of any religious group to believe the worst of any other. The next result was to drive the Hermanos Penitentes into greater secrecy—only furthering the zeal for religious Saturnalia.

Rarely visited by priests, largely ignored even by the local Catholic hierarchy, and discriminated against by New Mexican Catholics and non-Catholics alike, the Penitentes became isolated and turned inevitably to devotional excesses and emotional outbursts that formed the foundation for various forms of religious self-gratification. Believing implicitly in the sufferings of Christ, they sought to unite them with their own suffering and bitterness at being neglected by the Church, and to alleviate the latter by ultimate penance—hence the flagellation, self-mortification, and crucifixion of one of their own as evidence of devotion.

The Penitentes constructed small *moradas* (wrongly translated as “purple houses,” the term means a “dwelling”; it derives from *morar*, “to dwell” or “to inhabit”) near the villages, usually adjacent to a low hill, or *calvario*, where the religious rites were conducted and the paraphernalia stored. There, on Palm Sunday, the Hermanos de Luz gathered under the leadership of the Hermano Mayor, to observe a period of penance, fasting, and prayer, and to sing the *alabados* (or “hymns”) of the order. Only the men of the village participated in the rites, and they did not emerge again, except for occasional ceremonial appearances, until the end of Lent. During this time they selected one of their members to enact the role of Christ.

On Good Friday, the sacred procession itself took place: the entire company emerged from the *morada*, and the *carreta de la muerte* (or “death cart”) was removed from its storage room, drawn by one or more of the Hermanos, wearing a harness of horsehair, chains, or woven cactus. On the way, everyone flogged himself or his companion. The Cristo, carrying his own cross, or wearing a cactus-thorn crown and other punitive accessories, proceeded to the *calvario*, where he was bound to the cross in a dramatization of the crucifixion of Christ. Many were bound so tightly to enhance the feeling of pain, as to become crippled; sometimes iron nails were actually used instead of ropes, but this was extremely rare. Finally, the impersonator was lowered to the ground, and the ritual terminated with the return of the group to the *morada*.

The carving of the *carreta* (or “oxcart”) and its trappings was undertaken by regional folk artists; the most skilled sculptors seem to have been in the villages of Chimayó and Trampas, in the Rio Arriba area of New Mexico. The skeletal figure of a carved wooden body and skull, seated in a two-wheeled *carreta*, was called La Doña Sebastiana. She was painted with white paint or gesso, and held a small bow and arrow in her hands on her way to the hill. Later, the cart was returned to the *morada* for storage until the following year. The exotic appeal and artistic interest in these figures have, in recent years, made them important works of folk art, although they are very rare.

The Guennol figurine is smaller than many of the related carvings, and there is some uncertainty as to its origin. On the basis of its style

and general configuration, it would seem to have been made in the upper Rio Grande area for Penitente usage. It has the seated posture and the base commonly used on the *carreta*, but it has lost its bow and arrow. This is not unusual, however, since they readily become separated from the figurines when they are stored. The body is a realistically carved skeletal figure with the exposed ribs, bones, and skull completely characteristic of most in-the-round *santo* effigies. Human teeth have been set into the mouth. This figurine most likely dates from no earlier than 1880, and, more probably, is somewhat later. It is difficult to date such works precisely; because they are of wood, they must be repainted or repaired regularly over the years, and this reworking can obliterate a half century of existence.

Penitente customs have survived to the present, although today, due to the persecutory activity of the "Penitente Hunters," anti-Catholics, and those New Mexicans who regard the cult as outmoded, the rites are no longer public. Armed guards are stationed in strategic areas around the *moradas* during Holy Week to prevent curious outsiders from interfering with the religious activities.

F.J.D.

WOODEN DEATH IMAGE

Height, 12¹⁵/₁₆ inches

Los Hermanos Penitentes(?); Rio Arriba(?) New Mexico, about 1880–1920

Wooden Death Cart

As noted in the discussion of the wooden death image, the Penitentes, or Brothers of Our Father Jesus, long figured prominently in the religious life of New Mexico and southern Colorado, and have been a subject of fascination for observers of southwestern culture. In addition to their religious contributions, the Penitentes also established a tradition of architecture and art that flourishes in New Mexico today. One can still see wooden *santos* and *cristos*, death carts, and religious altars exhibited at the annual Spanish market sponsored by the Spanish Colonial Society and held under the portal of the Palace of the Governors in Santa Fe.

The Guennol death cart (or *carreta de la muerte*) is carved from cottonwood and is lashed together with hide. The figure was covered with gesso and its head topped with human hair. This superb example

of Penitente art comes from the area around Taos, New Mexico, and dates from 1890–1910.

Large death carts were an important part of most *moradas* (or meetinghouses). A traditional penance performed by a brother during a Good Friday procession was to tow the death cart with a horsehair rope wrapped under his armpit. He would be dressed only in his underwear, with a red rag covering his face. The penance was performed even when it was snowing, and sometimes large stones were added to the cart to make the task more difficult.

The Penitentes did not worship death. Death carts were simply symbols of mortality, to remind the brothers that they should prepare for death by living a religious life, which would ensure their entrance into heaven.

J.P.C.

*Wooden
Death Cart*



WOODEN DEATH CART

Cottonwood

Overall height, 25 inches; width, 9 inches; length of cart, 14 inches

Los Hermanos Penitentes; Taos County, New Mexico, 1890–1910

EX COLL.: Millicent Rogers Museum, Taos, New Mexico; Larry Frank, Arroyo Hondo, New Mexico; Harvey Mudd, Santa Fe.

Toucan-feather Headband

The Jívaro Indians (their Spanish name; they call themselves Shuara) of the highland Montaña region of northern Peru and southeastern Ecuador occupy an isolated area north of the Marañón River. Their rain-forest culture, centered around hunting and fishing and supplemented by agriculture, makes great use of the vegetal, mineral, and animal resources of their homeland. Their major crafts are basketry, fine pottery (made by the women), cotton weaving (produced by the men), some carving, and the manufacture of bark cloth.

Many tribes in the Montaña region have developed a highly militaristic way of life, but the Jívaro are exceptional in the extreme to which they pursue revenge and the art of warfare. The men live simply to raid neighboring tribes and secure the head of an enemy, which is then brought home, shrunk, and used in a ceremony to demonstrate victory and to avenge the death of an ancestor. This custom apparently grew out of a strong religious belief in the need to propitiate ancestors slain in battle and, thereby, to counteract any potential danger from their spirits. The shrunken head, known as a *tsantsa*, is their most widely known product.

Less familiar, but far more aesthetically impressive, are the magnificent feather headbands worn by the men on social and ceremonial occasions. There is a great variety in these: some are simple ringlets of feathers; others are more elaborate, built upon rattan bases, and decorated with feathers around the brim. By far the most impressive is the *tendéarma*, of which the Guennol headband is a superb example. These ornaments make use of the black, yellow, and red feathers of the forest toucan, which the men interweave in linear designs into netted cotton fiber bands, slightly reminiscent of miniature hammocks. These bands are fastened at each end, and the strands are braided into a heavier cord that permits the wearer to tie the headband around the forehead,



*Toucan-feather
Headband*

achieving the effect of a brilliantly plumed coronet. Occasionally monkey fur, human hair, or other ornaments are attached to the bands for additional embellishment. These decorations seem to have no esoteric significance beyond that of virile ornamentation.

F.J.D.

TOUCAN-FEATHER HEADBAND

Length, 15½ inches

Jívaro; Oriente, Ecuador, about 1900–25

EXHIBITED: The Brooklyn Museum, New York, since 1965.

Whale-ivory Hook Pendant (Niho Palaoa)

Necklace ornaments of sperm whale (*Physeter catodon*) tooth ivory, made for Hawaiian nobles (the *ali'i*), are among the most remarkable creations of Polynesian carving skill. The aesthetic of traditional Hawaiian art is so focused in the *niho palaoa* form that a perception of their particular beauty imparts an understanding of the principles of Hawaiian sculpture in general.

Several ideas of form and style of *niho palaoa* (the Hawaiian word *niho* means “tooth”; *palaoa*, “whale”) are repeated in other Hawaiian artifacts, notably in the feathered helmets of warriors, types of wooden images representing supernatural personages, and in some decorative patterns of cloaks and capes. The dimensions of the *niho palaoa* vary from the small prehistoric examples to the often massive specimens of post-European times.

Regardless of their proportions, *niho palaoa* have a monumental quality that has inspired some modern sculptors to interpret their shape in a large scale. Their subtle contrasts of symmetry and asymmetry and their infinite variety when viewed from different perspectives become most evident when they are held and turned in the hand. Such features as patina, the small ivory plugs to fill holes in the teeth, and the grain of the ivory itself all add to the visual effect of this remarkable ornament.

In a complete necklace, *lei niho palaoa* (*lei* meaning “to suspend” or “necklace”), the *niho palaoa* is strung on hundreds of strands of finely plaited human hair ingeniously arranged in coils that form bundles on either side of the tooth unit. Only some of the strands pass through the small suspension hole at the back of the palaoa. Fiber cords made from the bark of the Hawaiian *olona* shrub are worked into the hair strands to form strings, which in turn are used to tie the ends of a necklace behind the wearer’s neck.

The *niho palaoa*, or necklace unit, rested gracefully between the balanced hair bundles reinforcing the dignity of its chiefly owner, who regarded himself as a member of a sacred class above the populace. Chiefly attire, such as neck ornaments, feathered cloaks, helmets, and wands marked aristocratic standing. *Niho palaoa* were an important part of the regalia of ruling chiefs, proclaiming both their spiritual and temporal power. According to legend, wars have been fought over the possession of particular necklaces and the association of an individual with a certain necklace was an intimate one. Presumably each necklace acquired a personal name, in the Polynesian fashion of naming important objects, but little is known about this.

The hair of ancestors contained in a *lei niho palaoa* imparted a powerful *mana* (a “subtle essence” or “magical power”) to these hereditary



*Whale-ivory
Hook Pendant
(Niho Palaoa)*

heirlooms. This *mana* dominated ancient Polynesian life to an extent that transcends our modern imagination. Furthermore, high-caste men were preëminent in the ritual and artistic life of traditional Hawaii. The *niho palaoa* was predominantly a male ornament, although women of exceptionally noble birth were entitled to wear one.

Another aspect of *niho palaoa* is the significance of its most favored material, the sperm-whale tooth. Whale ivory was a beautiful and a rare commodity that was prized by Polynesians everywhere, and the only source of supply in pre-European days was the occasional stranded whale.¹

The origin of the *niho palaoa* form remains a subject of debate. It seems to have derived originally from the simple drilled mammalian tooth ornament, and from the later widespread custom of carving such teeth. A fishhook shape is suggested by the *niho palaoa*, and this idea is supported by related objects from other parts of Polynesia.² The lower projection may represent an outthrust tongue; when inverted, the *niho palaoa* also resembles crested helmets and the canopylike parts of certain wooden images.

The hair and fiber parts of a *lei niho palaoa* tend to decay over time. The harder part, however—the *niho palaoa*—outlasted the softer elements. Today it is this tooth unit that usually survives. The Guennol *niho palaoa* is typical in form and a fine example of this type of ornament. The surface is highly polished and the grain of the ivory clearly visible, underscoring the beauty of the pendant. This part is fascinating as pure sculpture, and, as a wonder of artistry, it is unsurpassed by other Polynesian sculptural art.

T.B.

WHALE-IVORY HOOK PENDANT (*NIHO PALAOA*)

Height, $4\frac{3}{8}$ inches; maximum width, $1\frac{1}{16}$ inches

Hawaiian Islands, about 1800–30

NOTES

1. Some of the oldest *niho palaoa* are carved of bone, coral, shell, and even wood, which reinforces the rarity of ivory. Use of the substance was restricted to chiefs, and it seems that it was never in abundance before whalers commenced regular calls to the Hawaiian Islands. Walrus ivory was also used in post-European times, probably after the return of Captain Cook's ships from the Arctic seas in 1778–79.

2. New Zealand Maori Moa hunter bone necklace units and the *hei matau* ("fishhook pendant") carved in nephrite offer striking parallels to *niho palaoa*. See Peter H. Buck, *The Coming of the Maori*, Wellington, New Zealand, 1952, pp. 285–89.

American Folk Art

ADELE EARNEST

American Folk Art

American folk art is not only a joy in itself, but also a lively record of the talents, hopes, fears, disciplines, and images that combined to shape this country. It had little to do with art for art's sake, or accepted, academic, and elitist standards, and much to do with the fulfillment of an immediate need and a creative urge. The men who carved and painted were visionaries who also had the sense and the skill with which to satisfy those needs by making practical objects. They were ordinary people. No, they were *extraordinary*: the lighthouse keeper in Maine who wanted a tiger and carved one; the hunter on Cape Cod who made his own wildfowl decoys; the Cumberland Valley renegade who whittled eagles in exchange for bed and board.

Research reveals little about these people because they were unrecognized in their day. Even their names are often unknown, but we can determine the approximate time and place in which they worked by the regional characteristics of their art and by comparisons with similar workmanship that is well documented.

The aim of the Guennol Collection has not been to search out representative examples of the many categories of folk art but to hunt for superior objects that captivate the heart as well as the eye. Choices have focused on sculptural, three-dimensional carvings in wood. Major selections have come directly or indirectly from other passionate collectors who were aware of the historical and aesthetic importance of American folk art in the 1920s: Holger Cahill, Robert Laurent, Henry F. Du Pont, Edith Gregor Halpert, and Winsor White. Nearly all the carvings originated in the northeastern states, where the early settlers established a tradition of good craftsmanship, thrift, and determination.

A number of the carvings, including the sheaf of wheat, the Centaur, and the bird tree, use ancient symbols that acquired fresh expression in this

new land. Others, like the wildfowl decoys, represent a folk art, unique to America. Present in the collection also are the beloved farm animals—creatures that occupy a prominent place in the folk art of most cultures—and the whale—immortalized by American writers, painters, and carvers.

Workmanship varies as widely as subject matter. Some carvings indicate the trained hand of an expert; others seem to have been put together by a workman more imaginative and ingenious than practiced. This is understandable. In the nineteenth century, towns, known for their ship building centers and carriage trade, attracted artisans who were as well acquainted with their tools as with the properties of symmetry and grace, but the country craftsman had the advantage of being a jack-of-all-trades—joiner, smith, saddler, wheelwright, or painter—as the occasion demanded. The man who could build a barn or a wagon would also whittle a weathervane for the roof, a whirligig for the porch, or a rocking horse for the Christmas tree.

It has taken a long time for this folk art to receive its proper standing in art history. The first American folk art exhibition in a major museum did not occur until 1931, at the Newark Museum in New Jersey. In 1932 The Museum of Modern Art in New York introduced the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Collection (now housed in Williamsburg, Virginia). During the 1930s other great collections were started by Nina Fletcher Little, Jean Lipman, Elie Nadelman, and Electra Havemeyer Webb, who established the Shelburne Museum in Vermont. It was not until 1962 that an extensive, comprehensive exhibition was presented in New York by the new Museum of Early American Folk Arts (later known as the Museum of American Folk Art). In 1974 the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, offered *The Flowering of American Folk Art*, which further assured these arts a permanent place in the cultural history of the nation.

Most carvings in the Guennol Collection are from the nineteenth century. Few pieces from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries have survived. Genuine twentieth-century folk art is elusive because the practical motivation and widespread craftsmanship have disappeared. The “store-bought” and mass-produced have superseded the homemade. Nevertheless the public today is hungry for individuality and this has created an unprecedented boom in the arts and antiques market that is hard to satisfy. To answer the demand—since something always fills a vacuum in the shops and galleries—the “instant antique” and contemporary folk art have appeared.

Of the first, beware. In the second category, the occasional “undiscovered” regional talent often falls into the hands of a promoter’s agent who homogenizes it for the trade, stifling the healthy ingredients that made folk art possible in the first place. The naïve public then takes the place of the naïve artist. The Guennol Collection has steered clear of this “art.” Instead its treasures offer an insight into the roots as well as the flowering of American sculpture.

Man with Grapes

The most publicized figure in the Guennol Collection of American folk art is the man with grapes. Featured in major exhibitions of American folk art since 1931, it was first shown at the Newark Museum in an epoch-making event that presented American folk art—trade signs, weathervanes, eagles, toys, and decoys—as sculpture, to be counted and honored along with the more traditional forms of American art throughout history. As another landmark for the carving, the man with grapes was the first piece of American folk art to enter the Guennol Collection (1949).

This dapper gentleman with his bunch of grapes probably served as a trade sign at a tavern, hostel, or ordinary. Appropriate eye-catching images decorated the counter or the entranceway of public places to attract customers. The baker had his trade sign, a sheaf of wheat; the cobbler, a shoe; the apothecary, a mortar and pestle; the butcher, a saw and cleaver; the printer, a Bible.

The date of the figure must be judged mainly from the costume, since the carver is unknown. The short jacket with rolled edges; narrow, notched lapels; slant pockets; tight trousers tucked into “Hessian” boots; and the hat—a precursor of the bowler—place the carving between 1855 and 1860. Yet the style, the stiff frontal pose, the tapered legs, and the oversize head suggest an earlier date. Perhaps the artist was an elderly carver whose techniques had been formed earlier. The use of bone in the deep eye sockets suggests familiarity with materials from the sea. The artist Robert Laurent, from whom the piece was purchased, found the carving in Wells, Maine, in 1924.

The grapes, held high in one hand, are secured by a cluster of wires. The other hand held an object now missing, possibly a wine glass. A cluster of grapes, used alone, was a traditional trade sign for nineteenth-century inns, but this combination of a gentleman with grapes is so far unique. The carving is in excellent condition, except for a slight restoration on the brim of the hat. The base is modern. An olive green color pervades all.

A fascinating aspect of the man with grapes is its relationship to the sculpture of Elie Nadelman (1882–1946). Many characteristics of the Guennol carving—the bowler hat, the fluid forms that reveal no anatomy, and the attenuated legs—were favorite and repeated motifs of this artist, who loved and collected American folk art.

The abstractness of early American folk art was due to a natural economy, restraint, and concentration on essentials, rather than to any aesthetic theory. Yet it has been acknowledged that many artists of the 1920s, including Nadelman, Laurent, Bernard Karfiol, and William Zorach, were attracted to and influenced by American folk art because of its kinship with abstract art.



*Man with
Grapes*

The man with grapes is not only a major figure in the Guennol Collection, but it also represents a key development in the history of American sculpture.

MAN WITH GRAPES

Height, 16 inches
Wells, Maine, 1855–1860

EX COLL.: Robert Laurent, Ogunquit, Maine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Art in America*, January 1944, p. 55; Jean Lipman, *American Folk Art*, Meriden, Conn., 1948, no. 66; Erwin O. Christensen, *Index of American Design*, New York, 1950, no. 132; "Provocative Parallels," *Art in America*, July 1969, p. 94, p. 95, ill.; Thomas P. F. Hoving, "'Valuables and Ornamental Items,' The Collection of Mr. and Mrs. Alastair Bradley Martin," *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, XXVIII, 3, November 1969, pp. 147–60, p. 160, ill.; Robert Bishop, *American Folk Sculpture*, New York, 1974, p. 605; Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974, p. 161, ill.; Helen M. Franc and Jean Lipman, *Bright Stars, American Painting and Sculpture Since 1776*, New York, 1976, p. 67; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 51, no. 23; *Two Hundred Years of American Sculpture*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1976, p. 94, p. 95, ill.; Nine Howell Starr, "Perspective on American Folk Art," *The Clarion, America's Folk Art Magazine*, Spring 1979, p. 30.

EXHIBITED: *American Folk Sculpture*, Newark Museum, New Jersey, October 29, 1931–January 31, 1932, no. 31; *American Folk Art*, Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York, Fall 1932, no. 158; *American Folk Sculpture*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, November 1, 1949–January 8, 1950, no. 22; *Initial Loan Exhibition, Museum of Early American Folk Arts*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 5–November 18, 1962, no. 27; *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 31; *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971, no. 31; *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, February 1–March 24, 1974, no. 210; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 23.

Sheaf of Wheat

The sheaf of wheat is a perfect companion for the man with grapes. Bread and wine have been life-giving partners since the beginning of recorded time. Western civilization was sustained by the cultivation of wheat just as the East was dependent on rice and the New World on corn. In Europe the sheaf of wheat was an emblem of hospitality as well as a shop sign. In rural areas it was customary to bring home the first sheaf harvested, hang it in the kitchen, and honor it with a celebration of feasting and drinking. Ancient Egyptian stone carvings portray grapes and wheat being offered as symbols of life in Pharaonic processions.

The Guennol sheaf of wheat is an American version of the staff of life, superb in concept and execution. The carver, exact provenance, and date are unknown, but the piece was found in New England and the style reflects the Classical Revival period of the early nineteenth century, when this country, having won independence, turned to the architectural styles of ancient Greece and Rome in an effort to dignify the new nation and celebrate its democratic origins. This sheaf, although only fifteen and one-half inches high, is monumental in effect. It consists of a column of reedlike stems girdled by a Grecian loop. The heads of grain drape in even succession from the center and form a double crest that circles above the column and around a small iron ring. This arrangement centralizes the design and maintains the weight in proper balance. The sign undoubtedly hung from a bracket inside or outside the door of a baker's shop.

The design is beautifully proportioned and ordered, but never rigid. Each surface is modeled. The grains of wheat, carved in raised relief, accent the full ripened kernels. The play of convex stems and concave spaces in the column is structural yet subtle. The column tapers at the waist and flares slightly at the top and the base.

The original color may have been close to the actual golden stalks of grain, but today the tone has aged to a mellow ocher. At least three coats of paint have been applied over the years. The girdle shows an undercoat of gray.

The Newport Historical Society of Rhode Island owns a sheaf-of-wheat shop sign carved in the half round by Charles Noble about 1900. The sheaf of wheat in the Guennol Collection is the only known example carved fully in the round—a masterpiece by any and all standards.



*Sheaf of
Wheat*

SHEAF OF WHEAT

Height, 15½ inches; width, 13½ inches

New England, 1820–30

EX COLL.: Erwin D. Swann, New York City.

EXHIBITED: *Initial Loan Exhibition, Museum of Early American Folk Arts*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 5–November 18, 1962, no. 49.

Centaur

Scholars generally agree that the mythological Centaur, half man and half horse, was probably inspired by the wild horsemen of Thessaly who joined the Persian invasion of the Peloponnesus and rode with such terrifying speed the Greeks thought that horse and man were one.

Whatever the origin, the Centaur as a theme has survived in fine art and in the popular arts throughout the centuries. The Guennol Collection includes a nineteenth-century American interpretation. Found in Utica, New York, the carving is attributed to a Mr. Dines, who, according to local sources, carved and painted it for his grandson.

The body, that of a horse, stands squarely on its four equine legs. Its flanks, lean and spare, contrast with the powerful human torso that joins the horse at the man's waist. The human part of the figure dominates, with its deep chest and huge arms. The man's right arm is raised, and he holds a spear horizontal to the ground. Visually and psychologically, the carving portrays an awesome but not a frightening figure. This Centaur is definitely a friend, ready to strike a blow for a good cause on behalf of a young boy.

The head and face, positioned squarely on a short neck, have the fawnlike ears, low forehead, and pointed hairline characteristic of a Satyr. The mouth is little more than punctuation under the attenuated nose. The Satyr, however, is a combination of goat and man, rather than horse and man. The Guennol carving has no goat horns or goat hooves, and the tail is definitely that of a horse. The ridged carving of the arched tail is repeated in the treatment of the man's locks. Sagittarius, the ninth sign of the zodiac, also appeared occasionally in American folk art—namely in weathervanes—but Sagittarius wields a bow and arrow, not a spear, and he is not graced with pointed ears. Certainly, the Centaur, the Satyr, and Sagittarius were related.

The painting is worn and granular on some surfaces, but the face and body of the man retain traces of the original flesh tones. The hair and brows are dark, although the black coat of the horse has become a soft texture. Fortunately, the paint has not been retouched. Only the wooden spear is a restoration, and the base is contemporary.

The legendary Mr. Dines, not a sophisticated man, had scant knowledge of anatomy. In profile, the frontal curves of the oval head, the chest, and the equine body are accentuated by the reverse concave line of the forelegs. No horse ever had legs like that, but who has ever seen a Centaur? Perhaps a picture inspired Mr. Dines. Lithographs and prints fired the imagination of many a folk carver and painter. The German immigrants who settled in Mohawk Valley, where this figure was made, introduced to American folk art a wonderful assortment of such legendary creatures as the unicorn, the distelfink, and the Centaur,



Centaur

which are customarily associated with Pennsylvania fractur paintings and painted furniture.

The sculpture has precisely the same height and width: twenty-two and one-half inches tall by twenty-two and one-half inches long. The body is layered in vertical sections that are well fitted together; legs and arms are separate units, joined to the torso by wooden pegs. Such wood figures were often made as pull toys, mounted on a platform with wheels. Although the size of the Centaur is right for this purpose, the bottom of the piece shows no evidence of motion, and the throwing-spear is too delicate for action in the hands of a child. The carving may have been a "spectator" toy, to be enjoyed visually, or perhaps it wasn't a toy at all but an ornament for the parlor mantle or cupboard, where it was customary to display handiwork by family or friends. Whatever its use or purpose, the Guennol Centaur is a unique creature who stands ready to champion a worthy cause in the enchanted world of the imagination.

CENTAUR

Attributed to Mr. Dines

Height, 22½ inches; length, 22½ inches

Utica, New York, mid-19th century

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 17, no. 24; Amy Goldin, "Problems in Folk Art," *Artforum*, 14, June 1976, p. 48, ill.

EXHIBITED: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 24.

Rocking Horse

The rocking horse was the most popular toy of both boys and girls in the nineteenth century. Children have always loved toy representations of the grown-up life around them; the horse was the pride of the family, and a necessity for the farm and for transportation. Period portraits of children show the hobbyhorse prominently displayed with other toys, such as dolls, kites, balls, and carved figures of various domestic animals. The appeal of the rocking horse ended when the train and the motor car captured the child's affection.

The many versions of the rocking horse range from a simple nailed construction of boards, rails, and runners, to a full-bodied, realistic



*Rocking
Horse*

model like the Guennol horse, which is carved and painted as meticulously as a piece of furniture. One requirement was essential to all rocking horses: the four equine legs had to be proportioned and splayed at the proper angle to meet the rockers and to rock comfortably. The physical pleasure of rocking has charmed all ages.

The Guennol horse measures a mere twenty inches long. Most rocking horses range from three to five feet in length and are large enough for a child to sit on the back and rock ecstatically “up hill and down dale.” This black beauty is too small for such exercises; it must have been rocked by hand only. The brown leather trappings and decorative brass studs (similar to those on the Guennol Hessian whirligig) signify that it was modeled after a workhorse rather than a riding horse.

The style of carving indicates the middle years of the nineteenth century. Joints are neatly mortised and held together by square pegs. The head is well set; the oval eyes and nostrils carefully delineated. The arched neck, the gleaming curves of the body, and the full horse-hair tail distinguish this well-proportioned toy that was loved and cared for, although lacking in pedigree: carver and provenance are unknown.

ROCKING HORSE

Height, 15½ inches; length, 20½ inches
Northeastern United States, mid-19th century

Hessian Whirligig

The Hessian soldier whirligig was a favorite in Pennsylvania long after General Howe and his mercenaries had surrendered to General Washington at Yorktown. The whirligig, a wind toy, was usually a single, erect, full-figured carving of a person of authority, equipped with paddle-shaped arms that revolved giddily and pointlessly in the breeze. The Hessian soldier, with his colorful close-fitting uniform and rigid stance, perfectly suited the form and function of the whirligig. Mounted on a pivot on top of a post, it turned and whirled its arms to the delight of all spectators.

Originally in the Edith Gregor Halpert Collection, the Guennol whirligig is attributed to the carver who made the three Hessian whirligigs formerly in the well-known Joseph B. Martinson Collection (which was exhibited by the Museum of Early American Folk Arts in 1962 and later shown in the United States Pavilion at Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan). The Martinson trio consisted of a pair of officers and a single soldier. The four are similar in size, painting, and costume: they wear short-fronted red jackets with decorative shiny brass studs, chest straps, and white trousers tucked into black boots. All have ruddy faces accented by black brows and moustaches. The conical hat on the Guennol carving matches the headgear on the single soldier in the Martinson group.

The work on all four is decorative and functional with little effort at portraiture or anatomy. No hands or feet were required. The arms are long thin paddles, or baffles, that swing from a central axis, doweled loosely through the body at the shoulders. All planes are strong and simple, hewn to the form of the post from which the figure was cut.

The painting is pleasantly faded and worn. The paddles are old restorations. Because of accidents in wind and weather, few arms of old whirligigs are original. A brisk northeast storm could blow a man down, and this soldier has seen duty for well over one hundred fifty years.

The oft-repeated notion that whirligigs are Pennsylvania Sunday toys is more romantic than accurate. It is true that the children of German religious sects—the Mennonites, the Amish, and the Dunkers—were not allowed to play boisterous games on the Sabbath. Rest and contemplation (maybe of a whirligig) were encouraged on the seventh day. Sunday was observed as a quiet day in most communities in the nineteenth century. In New England the Indian whirligig was popular as well as the sailor and the flying goose.

Early in the twentieth century the public became fascinated with gears and automation. The single-figured wind toy was replaced by complicated Saul Steinberg-like fantasies of people and things whose ingenious forms were activated by propellers, fans and vanes that interacted in space and produced a shifting relationship. Little men



*Hessian
Whirligig*

chopped wood incessantly or women washed clothes as long as the wind blew.

Few genuine old single-figured whirligigs are now to be found. The nineteenth-century Guennol Hessian is an example of the best, made at a time when subject matter, form, and function met in simply stated and pleasurable terms.

HESSIAN WHIRLIGIG

Attributed to the anonymous carver of the three Hessian whirligigs in the
Joseph B. Martinson Collection

Height, 21½ inches

Probably Pennsylvania, early 19th century

EX COLL.: Edith Gregor Halpert; Mrs. Andre Previn; Michael Friedman; Kronen
Gallery, New York.

Conductor and Policeman Whirligigs

These two whirligigs belong to the turn of the century era. The railroad conductor came from the Joseph B. Martinson Collection of whirligigs, which was exhibited in the United States Pavilion at Expo '70, in Osaka, Japan.

An amusing, pompous figure, the conductor has a round body positioned on tall, thin, stick legs. The round head, obviously cut from the same cylinder as the body, is topped by a proper red cap with a wide, flat visor. The facial features are carved with more prominence than modeling. The huge oval eyes dominate the pale face and look sideways as well as straight ahead. Details of the jacket—the buttons, black pockets, and lapels—were rendered by someone well acquainted with uniforms. The red color of the coat, which is still clear, may indicate that of a porter rather than a conductor. Or perhaps he was a signal man, as astonished as he looks. His flat, oversize paddles would rotate in reverse action whenever a breeze, or even a train, passed by.

The short, plump policeman is a fine foil for the tall, rigid conductor. The policeman was carved with generous contours and realistic detail. His chubby arms hold real white paddles that rotate free from the figure. The jacket, full trousers, and neat shoes are well shaped. The face, with its deep eye sockets and sporty red moustache, suggests that this was a likeness of an actual person. Details of buttons, turn-

down collar, and white shirt were well observed. The uniform and cap have a black sheen. The policeman's badge and insignia are painted silver. The number 34 on his back is inexplicable.

The carvers and provenance of both whirligigs are unknown. The policeman came from the collection of Jay Irving, who was a police buff, historian, and cartoonist. Collectors are intrigued by whirligigs because of the amusing shapes, costumes, and pointless gaiety of these authoritative little men.



*Conductor
Whirligig*

*Policeman
Whirligig*

CONDUCTOR WHIRLIGIG

Height, 20³/₁₆ inches

Northeastern United States, about 1900

EX COLL.: Joseph B. Martinson, New York City.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 9, no. 63.

EXHIBITED: United States Pavilion, Expo '70, Osaka, Japan, 1970; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 63.

POLICEMAN WHIRLIGIG

Height, 8¹/₁₆ inches

Northeastern United States, about 1900

EX COLL.: Jay Irving, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 9, no. 35.

EXHIBITED: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 35.

Nanny Goat and Kids

The charming nanny goat and her two kids may or may not have been toys. Small farm animals were carved just for the pleasure of carving and to be shown off when company came. Since there is little sign of wear on the animals they probably spent the early part of their lives on a shelf, from which they could be admired.

The mother watches as her two children play at a butting match, heads down, tails up, short stubby legs firmly set. The carver obviously enjoyed the pairing of appropriate parts: the nanny's tail amusingly balances the matriarchal beard; she has two udders, and, of course, there are the two kids shaped from one block.

Paint patterns of black and white are similarly arranged in a neat balance. The mother is black with free-form white patches. The white kid has a black patch; the black kid, a white one, as well as a white spot on the end of the tail. All surfaces have been shellacked. Details of eyes, nostrils, hooves, and fetlocks were observed. The anonymous carver from Vermont achieved that combination of playful forms, undoubtedly inspired by genuine affection for his subject, that we relish in folk art.



*Nanny Goat
and Kids*

NANNY GOAT AND KIDS

Goat: Height, $6\frac{1}{16}$ inches; length, $6\frac{1}{2}$ inches

Kids: Height, each, 3 inches; length, 6 inches

Vermont, about 1900

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Marian Klamkin and Charles Klamkin, *Wood Carvings: North American Folk Sculptures*, New York, 1974, p. 98; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 81, no. 61.

EXHIBITED: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 61.

Zoar Sow

Who has ever seen a chartreuse pig? No matter, for folk art isn't a copy of the real thing but an expression of the carver's fancy.

The Guennol sow is attributed to a member of the Zoar community in Ohio, a German "Separatist" society founded in 1817. According to records the members were dedicated, God-fearing people who came to this country in search of religious and civil liberty. They called their village "Zoar" after the Zoar to which Lot fled for safety when God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah. A property of some five thousand acres was the common possession of the society, and each member contributed his or her share of labor and craft. To be able to work with one's hands was considered a godly gift as well as an earthly necessity. (Today the Ohio Historical Society is restoring the village.)

Whether the sow was actually carved by a member of the Zoar society is undetermined, but it was definitely made in this German-based community. Three other examples of folk art in the Guennol Collection—the Centaur, the bird tree, and the eagle—came from areas settled by Germans who kept their craft traditions alive.

The body of the sow is made of two identical halves doweled together. The carving is fanciful, even delicate, with the front feet on tiptoe. The expression on the face, slightly concave, is one of expectancy, but the highly visible twelve teats and eleven ribs indicate that she should be spent, not expectant. Black spots are splashed at random; the mouth and nostrils are touched with red.

The sow and the goats in the Guennol Collection are not anatomically correct and thus are not informative about the animals they portray. Neither are they turned out of a traditional mold or produced on a repetitive assembly line. They are one-of-a-kind, handmade delights.

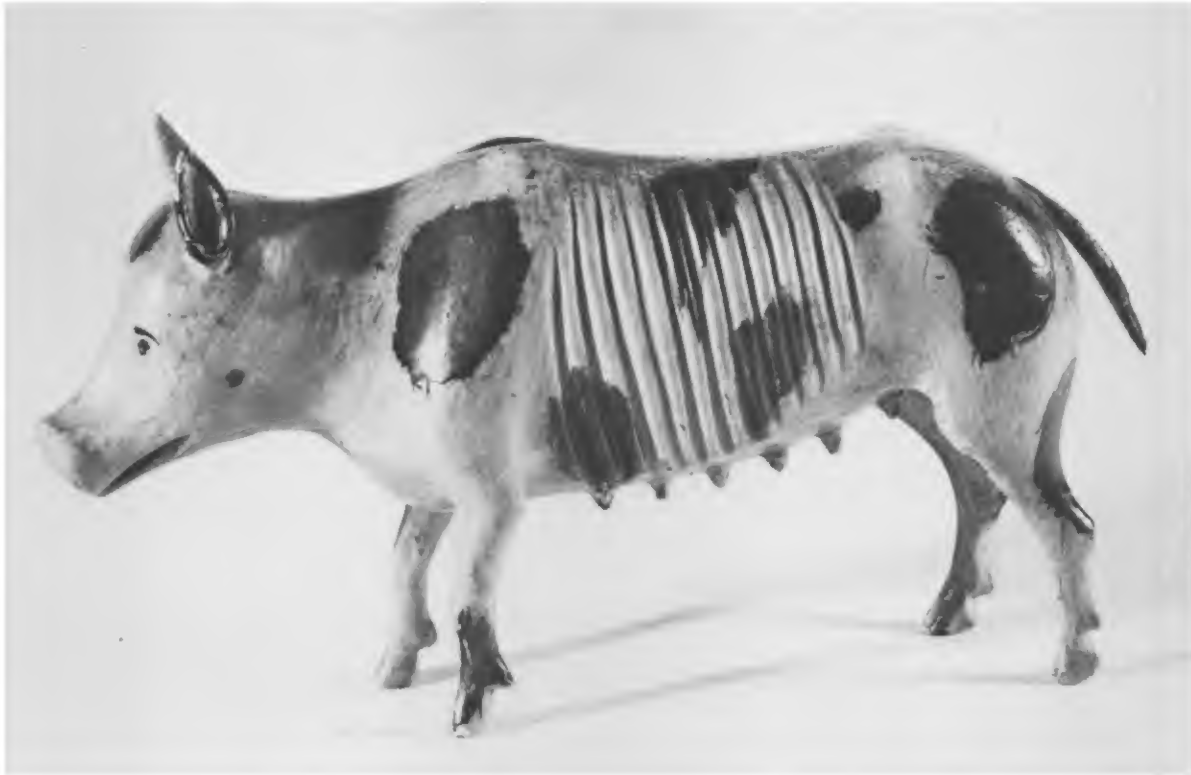
ZOAR SOW

Height, about 3¹/₁₆ inches; length, 7 inches

Zoar, Ohio, about 1880

BIBLIOGRAPHY: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 89, no. 60, ill. p. 81; J.M. Gaynor, "The Story of Zoar," *Ohio Antique Review*, August 1976, p. 29.

EXHIBITED: *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 60.



Zoar Sow

Red Bull

The weathervane played a significant role in daily life in America through the nineteenth century. A correct reading was vital to travelers on muddy roads, sailors setting out to sea, and farmers whose crops depended on a favorable turn of the wind. The vane on the village church caught the eye and lifted the soul toward heavenly rewards.

Favorite subjects on eighteenth-century churches were the weathercock, Angel Gabriel with his fatal trumpet, and the more formal bannerets and arrows. One of the earliest church vanes was the "Golden Cockerell," made in 1721 by Deacon Shem Drowne and still atop the First Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. A green-eyed grasshopper placed on top of Fanueil Hall in 1742 looked down on the historic, bloody streets of Boston and the beginnings of the American Revolution. The vane is still in place, making its appointed rounds above today's busy plaza.

By the nineteenth century farmers and tradesmen fashioned their own vanes in wood or metal and the subjects signified their special



Red Bull

interests. Horses, cows, sheep, pigs, chickens, and deer appeared on barns and other roof tops. In town, the subject matter included ships, fish—even mermaids—and an occasional Indian. Vanes with patriotic themes, such as Columbia, the eagle, and Uncle Sam, were visible in both town and country. The weathervane reflected the signs of the times as well as the way of the wind.

The red bull weathervane in the Guennol Collection was made for a barn built in 1870 in Newtown, Connecticut. As with most vanes, the full impact of the image depends on its being silhouetted against the sky. The large head emphasizes the powerful forepart. The eye is a simple, cut-out hole that must have revealed a bit of blue sky or a slice

of the moon. The diminutive white feet have a human quality. One foot is raised coyly. The two white horns are tasseled but not torn.

Only one horn should be shown in profile, but the folk artist loved repetition and the farmer, preferring his own interpretation, may have included the two horns in order to complement the two pairs of feet. The bull's coat is somewhat worn in spots but his color, a vibrant red, now enlivens the Guennol Collection as it once enlivened the Connecticut landscape.

RED BULL

Height, 27 inches; length, 39 inches

Newtown, Connecticut, 1870

EX COLL.: Robert Hallock, Newtown, Connecticut.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Robert Hallock, "Weathervanes: Native American Sculpture," *Lith-opinion*, 11, Summer 1973, p. 40.

Dancing Doll

Jumping jacks, jugglers, squeak toys, and dancing dolls that entertained when manipulated were popular sources of amusement in the mid-nineteenth century.

The name, age, and carver of the little Guennol dancer are unknown, but it is reasonable to conclude that the toy is southern, made probably before the Civil War for a white child. Few furnishings or folk art objects that belonged to Negro families survived the scorched earth destructions of the Civil War, but in the South the white child was usually reared by a nanny and played with toys of Negro character.

This engaging doll originally was mounted on a slanted ramp that served as a platform on which she danced when the wire attached to her back was animated. The green gored skirt is short, to allow the jointed legs a freedom of movement. The notched red and green bandana covers the front and back like a bib. The flat hat with its narrow brim sits on the back of the head, atop the closely curled hair. The white of the eyes and the thick lips accent the broad dark face.

The little black figure is worn from age, love, and the performance of her appointed duty—yet she still dances.



*Dancing
Doll*

DANCING DOLL

Height, 10 inches

Southern United States, mid-19th century

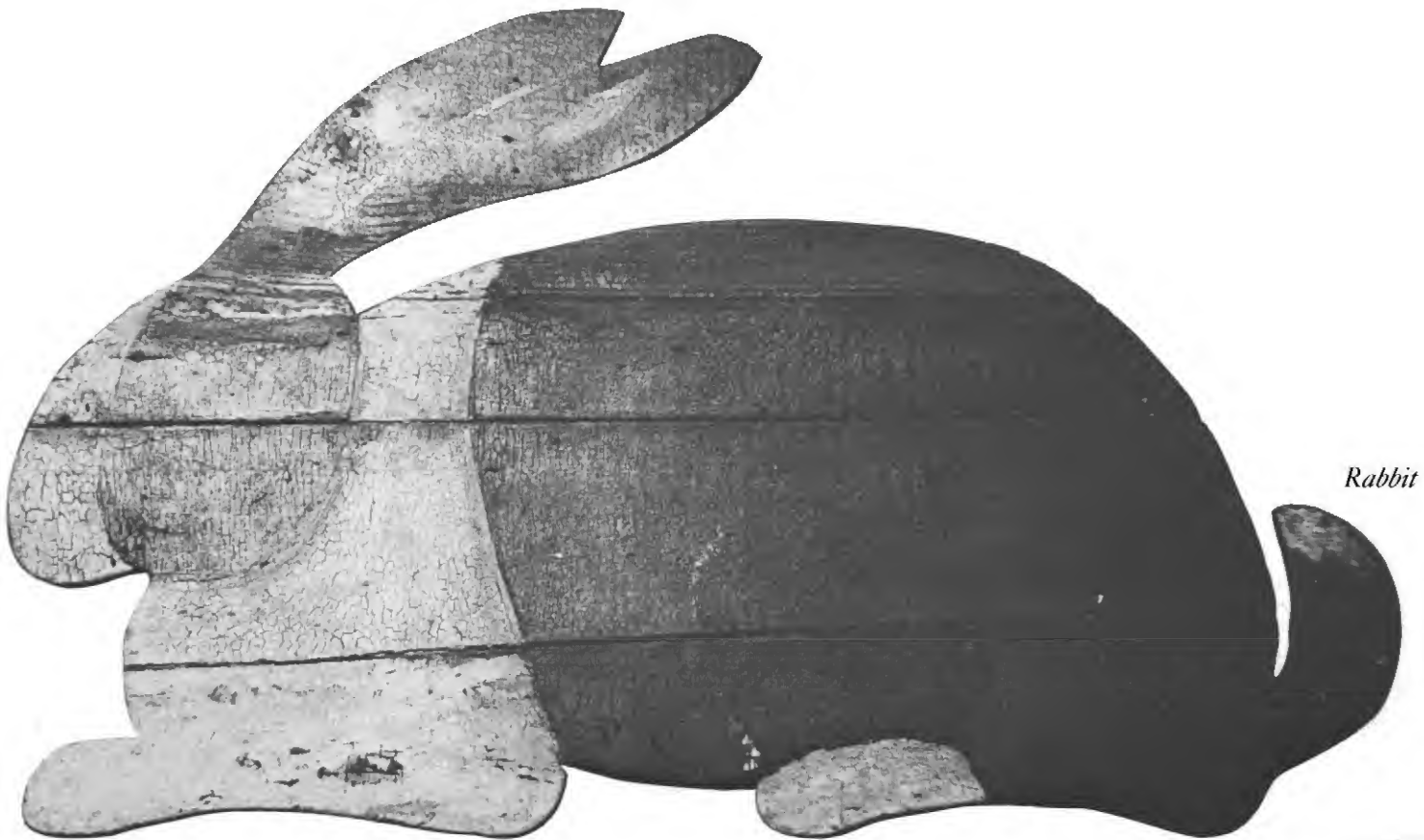
BIBLIOGRAPHY: Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974, p. 173, ill. p.178.

EXHIBITED: *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, February 1–March 24, 1974, no. 238.

Rabbit

The rabbit is a delightful eye-catcher, as any sign should be. Made of four boards each three-quarters of an inch thick, cut to shape and braced on the rear with strap iron, the rabbit presents a clear and provocative silhouette. Unlike the other trade signs in the Guennol Collection, such as the man with grapes and the sheaf of wheat—both of which represent the work of a master craftsman—the rabbit sign suggests a rural artist unskilled in complex composition, but sure of the essential statement that he wished to make. The small hole in the base is not deep enough or worn enough to be that of a weathervane that turned in the wind. More likely the rabbit was a “stabile.”

The front is painted white with contrasting black ears and cheeks; the back is black with one light accent on the paw. The color says “rabbit” as clearly as the shape. The rhythmic flow of the movement continues from the gentle curve of the head and the long flopping ears, down and along the humped back, to the perky tail. All is compact contentment as a rabbit should be.



Rabbit

Found near Chatham, New York, this anonymous trade sign is an authentic example of twentieth-century folk art: made out of “found” material, for private use, and hewn to a reductive shape according to one man’s vision.

Rabbits have long been favorite creatures in folk art and folklore. They inhabited the gardens of the 1890s along with cast-iron furniture and statuary. There were also chalkware rabbits, rabbit squeak toys, and cuddly cloth bunnies. Storybooks told enchanting tales of other, less predictable rabbits, such as Uncle Remus’s Brer Rabbit or Alice in Wonderland’s friend who led her down the rabbit hole. Whether the Guennol rabbit is in any way related to them must remain pure speculation.

RABBIT

Height, 18 inches; length, 30 inches

Columbia County, New York, early 20th century

Kingfisher *by Bernier*

Bernier, a lumberjack crippled from work in the Maine woods, retired to Saco Bay, where he carved and fished. Known locally as an eccentric, he shaped eagles, great and small; backyard birds, such as robins and bluebirds; as well as fanciful reptilian creatures, among them dragons, frogs, snakes, and crocodiles. He also carved and painted decorative household ornaments: wall plaques with mounted fish, and wooden flowerpots with simulated plants.

The kingfisher in the Guennol Collection represents Bernier’s best work, a balance between accurate observation—he had a firsthand acquaintance with kingfishers—and invention. This handsome carving is anatomically correct, although oversize, and the pose is characteristically bold. The bird sports a rakish crest and a saucy tail. His straight strong beak holds a minnow—a modern replacement; time has claimed the original fish.

The carving technique, colors, and brushwork of the kingfisher are almost identical to that of Bernier’s renowned carving of an eagle (in the Barbara Johnson Collection of folk art); they could be companion pieces. The feathering on both birds is indicated by a series of shieldlike

units laid flat in orderly sequence. The wing tips fold back neatly upon the grooved tail feathers. The placement of the feet, and thus the stance of the two birds, is similar. The painting is typical of Bernier's work. A plain man, he used the plain colors in house paint for his birds.

The upper part of the kingfisher is slate gray; the under part and collar off-white. There is no shading. Irregular, quick brushstrokes of black, green, and white accent the patterns of the plumage. Bernier noted the characteristic, conspicuous white spot in front of the kingfisher's eye but he did take liberty with the color of the feet. Here they are yellow because Bernier's preference was yellow; a kingfisher's feet are gray.

No one interviewed in the Saco-Biddeford area had ever heard the carver's first name. Many Berniers of French-Canadian descent are to



Kingfisher

be found in the records of the town hall, but none is designated as a carver. Since this man's work has now been identified and recognized, more of his history may come to light. Obviously he was self-trained, unschooled by teacher or tradition, and found his own way like a true folk artist. The kingfisher is a splendid, vigorous carving from the world Bernier knew, loved, and recorded.

KINGFISHER

by Bernier

Height, including base, 14³/₁₆ inches

Saco-Biddeford, Maine; about 1910

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Robert Bishop, *American Folk Sculpture*, New York, 1974, p. 173.

Ram

The ram served as an imposing doorstop at the Cheney Mills—a textile factory in Manchester, Connecticut, operated by the Cheney family from 1838 until 1954, when the major part of the industry was sold. At that time the ram was transferred to the Cheney home, built in 1780 and still standing. The carving itself is difficult to date but it can be attributed to the mid-nineteenth century.

Since the ram, as a provider of wool, has long been a symbol for cloth and clothing, it was a natural subject for a fabric mill. For centuries the ram has been immortalized in stone and wood carvings, especially in old-world societies along the Mediterranean reaching from Egypt to the Caspian Sea.

This nineteenth-century American version is as modern as it is Classical. The carver approached his work quite differently from other sculptors represented in the Guennol Collection. He did not apply his concept in the material, nor did he build up his image piece by piece. Instead, he saw the figure in the wood, saw the organic shape of the reclining ram, before he took up his chisel and blade. He simply clarified and then released the figure from one solid, close-grained block of wood.

The large head is raised in a forward position, the better to act as a butt for the door. Eyes are indicated by grooves under the protruding brows. The horns, set close together, follow the form of the cheeks.



Ram

The curves of the haunch and shoulders parallel the rhythms of the forepart of the animal. The tucked-in legs at front and back are clearly defined, yet maintain the unity of the whole.

The natural wood surface of the ram has a smooth, sensuous quality, polished by years of handling, although its nose and one side are somewhat battered. The Guennol ram is a combination of the functional and the symbolic. Any block of wood might have been good enough for a doorstop. Fortunately one unknown artisan had the urge to create something beautiful as well as useful.

RAM

Height, 7 $\frac{5}{16}$ inches; length, 28 inches

Connecticut, mid-19th century

Ex COLL.: Cheney Family, Manchester, Connecticut.

Woman with Fan

Carvings of men and women, which were neither of historical figures nor designed to be shop signs, are rare in American folk art; portrait painting seems to have satisfied the desire for a likeness. Although the woman with fan is from Louisiana, her identity is unknown. Her full-length black dress suggests Spanish ancestry, since black was the habitual color for the costumes of elderly Spanish ladies. The red fan in her hand—the single touch of color—is further indication that the somber color does not mean mourning. The dark hair, parted sedately in the center and gathered in a bun, the V-neck of the gown, and the full bustle support a date in the 1870s.

The spare figure, hewn from one cylinder of wood four and one-half inches in diameter, retains an elemental sense of the original column. The carving that forms the apertures between waist and elbow is unfinished, but the hands, which lie flat against the volume of the skirt, are articulated. The facial features are barely suggested, with more interest being shown in overall volume and contour than in detail. This is especially evident when the figure is seen in profile: the outlines of bun, bosom, and bustle confirm a strong sculptural presence. The painting is somber, with a flat white on the face and dark accents designating eyes and brows.

The occasion for the statuette can only be surmised. Whoever she was, the subject of the Guennol carving must have been a solitary woman who, nevertheless, was capable of standing up and accepting whatever life had to offer.

WOMAN WITH FAN

Height, 19½ inches

Louisiana, about 1870

EXHIBITED: *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971, no. 56.



*Woman
with Fan*

Wildfowl Decoys and Ornamentals

The carving of wildfowl decoys, as a folk art, is unique to America. Due to an unusual combination of circumstances, the carving and the painting of these birds developed into an art on this continent, although the notion of luring a bird with its own image must be as old as man the hunter.

When the first colonists—the first white men—came to this land they found not only the forest primeval but also the native Indian with his seemingly strange customs. To lure the wildfowl out of the sky, within range of bow and arrow or slingshot, the Indian shaped a mud pile, a piece of wood, or a bunch of grasses to simulate a duck, a goose, or a shorebird. A group of such images he placed near the water's edge; then he hid and waited. If luck was with him, the birds saw the artifice and plummeted to join the decoys. If the hunter's aim was sure, he hit his target and had food for a savory feast.

Hunters from Europe improved on the Indian's device: they made durable decoys of pine and cedar, and saved them from season to season. They experimented with balance, weight, and outline until they evolved bird shapes that pleased man as well as bird. They painted their decoys to match the distinctive markings of each species, and over the years this process evolved into an art, a folk art whose beautiful abstract shapes also observed the characteristics of natural birds.

Other factors contributed to the development of the decoy, such as the invention of a superior gun, the Kentucky rifle, and later the twelve-gauge shotgun. In contrast to the restricted hunting preserves and waterfronts in England and on the continent, a hunter in America could travel freely along coastal and inland waterways.

There were also plenty of birds. Up and down this hemisphere passed the greatest bird migrations in the world. As a result, thousands of decoys have been made by our farmers, trappers, guides, and fishermen from Maine and Louisiana to California. Although most decoys had little aesthetic value and were discarded after hunting and land use became restricted, superb examples of the decoy art have survived.

A few dedicated hunters still make their own rig. But now the average sportsman buys manufactured, fabricated decoys and the great day of the handmade decoy has all but gone.

The three main categories of decoys are: floating lures, the ducks and geese made to ride the surface of the water; "stickup" shorebirds mounted on sticks in the sand and in the tidal flats; and solitary persuaders, the heron, loon, gull and crow that worked alone as "confidence" decoys. Most numerous are the duck decoys, such as the mallard, bluebill, pintail, canvasback, merganser, black, old squaw, and widgeon. "Stickups" included the charming little shorebirds that run

along the beach at low tide: the plover, yellowlegs, sandpiper, curlew, ruddy turnstone, and willet.

The Guennol Collection includes examples of the best of the handmade decoys that have been retrieved and cherished. All but three were originally in the private collection of Winsor White (1901–1975), a gentleman-sportsman and connoisseur of American antiques who lived in Duxbury, Massachusetts. White realized the significance of the wildfowl decoy before it was generally accepted as a treasure. He shocked antique dealers—as late as the 1940s—by offering these old hunting tools as “art,” with a price tag to suit. Winsor was always sure of his ground. Descended from the original settlers of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, he disliked having his opinions—or his prices—questioned. He never dickered. In offering a decoy to the Guennol Collection in 1965 he wrote, “You may have one shot at it for \$1500, and if you miss forget the other barrel.”¹

In 1969, The Metropolitan Museum of Art exhibited wildfowl decoys—a mallard, a pair of mergansers, and a loon—from the Guennol Collection, the first decoys acknowledged as fine art. The largest and most comprehensive collection of wildfowl decoys, assembled by Electra Havemeyer Webb, is installed in the Dorset House at the Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont.

Of all our folk arts none is more strikingly American than the art of the decoy—indigenous and unique to this country, popular in use, a sculptural Audubon of the wildfowl that still fly through our spacious skies.

NOTE

1. Letter from Winsor White to A. B. Martin, December 10, 1965.

Mallard Decoy

This mallard decoy, attributed to a member of the Almy family who lived in Dartmouth, Massachusetts, during the eighteenth century, is reputed to be the oldest extant duck decoy of colonial origin. (The first known American Indian decoys date from about 1000 A.D.) Although the exact date for the mallard is impossible to determine, the shape and style suggest the eighteenth century. The high, compact body reflects the high-riding, rounded ships of that period: ship construction and decoy design share common structural principles; each must remain afloat no matter the vicissitudes of tide, wind, and water. Also, according to Winsor White, an early date for the mallard is further supported by a similarity in configuration to wildfowl portrayed in eighteenth-century paintings and prints.¹

The type of wood has not been determined, but its weight and close graining account in part for the decoy's excellent state of preservation. (Later decoy carvers preferred softer wood, such as pine or cedar.) Even the incised edges are smooth; they are worn but intact, with no fractural damage.

Viewed from the front, the head is a perfect oval. When the mallard is seen in profile, it is clear that the contours of the neck as well as the line of the front wing continue the curve of the breast. Eye, eye socket, and brow are strongly modeled. The wing is rendered in surprising detail to show feather edging as well as cross accents. The tips



*Mallard
Decoy*

of the primaries are free. Little paint remains except for a lingering reddish hue and dark accents in the ridges. The bird itself glows with a natural wood sheen, the result of years of appreciative handling.

There is no doubt that the mallard was carved as a decoy, not as an ornament. The lead weight poured into the base of the bird is proof positive. Only a decoy made to be used requires such construction. The additional weight of the lead lowers the flotation level and keeps the buoyant bird from keeling over in rough water.

No other decoy has been found that resembles this carving in style or workmanship. The Guennol mallard is a handsome historic decoy that is still in prime condition.

MALLARD DECOY

Length, 12½ inches

Massachusetts, 18th century

PROVENANCE: Attributed to the Almy Family, Dartmouth, Massachusetts.

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, p. 150, pl. 130; Hal Sorenson, *Decoy Collector's Guide*, October–December 1965, p. 13.

EXHIBITED: *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966; *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970; *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971.

NOTE

1. Letter from Winsor White to A. B. Martin, December 10, 1965.

Pair of Red-breasted Merganser Decoys *by Lothrop T. Holmes*

Lothrop T. Holmes (1824–99) lived out his seventy-five years in Kingston, Massachusetts. He was a ship's carpenter, and he loved ships and sailing, and wood and woodworking. The wealthy branch of the local Holmes clan hired him for their cabinet refinishing and parlor decoration. In his spare time Holmes hunted and made decoys, and was known as the best shot in the area.



*Pair of
Red-breasted
Merganser Decoys*

This pair of mergansers by "Lot" Holmes and one other pair known to have been made by him are recognized by decoy collectors as the finest antique merganser decoys extant. They represent the "king" and "queen" of the Guennol decoy collection.

To all appearances they were made some time before the Civil War for a special occasion. There is no sign of bird shot or extensive use but the lead seine weight and the personal stamp of L.T. Holmes on the bottom identify the mergansers as true working decoys. (The name of the owner was often stamped or cut on the bases of decoys for identification, in case they disappeared in a Down East storm and washed up on a distant shore.)

The shape as well as the color design of any decoy are dictated mainly by the practical necessity of identifying the species, but Holmes also created a carving that any sculptor would be proud of. Each surface is modeled individually but conceived as part of an organic whole.

The painting is as elegant and sophisticated as the carving. The stylized wing pattern of ivory is bordered by waves of black and grayish brown. Under parts are light. Chestnut tones predominate on the hen. The natural green glossy head of the drake is now a deep, aged green; a

white collar circles the neck. Each bird has a slim, dusky red bill. The height of the crested heads is unusual in decoys. Such an alert posture signals danger rather than safe harbor: in real life the merganser drake is conspicuously wary when accompanied by his mate.

Lot Holmes had no training in art and no contact with the art world, but his mergansers compare in beauty with carvings of similar birds from any period and culture.

PAIR OF RED-BREASTED MERGANSER DECOYS

by Lothrop T. Holmes

Height, each, 10 inches; length, drake, 13½ inches; hen, 16⅓ inches

Kingston, Massachusetts, 1860–70

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, pl. 113; William J. Mackey, Jr., *American Bird Decoys*, New York, 1965, pl. 70; Hal Sorenson, *Decoy Collector's Guide*, October–December 1965; Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974, p. 166, no. 210, ill. p. 166; Adele Earnest, "The Wildfowl Decoy," in *How To Know American Folk Art*, ed. Ruth Andrews, New York, 1977, p. 39; Bonnie Barrett Stretch, "The Lure of the Decoy," *Art and Antiques*, November–December 1979, p. 56.

EXHIBITED: *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966; *Museum of American Folk Art Exhibition*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 20–November 20, 1966; World's Fair, United States Pavilion, Montreal, 1967; *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 26; *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971, nos. 36, 37; *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, February 1–March 24, 1974.

Sandpiper

by Lothrop T. Holmes

The lively little sandpiper decoy by Lothrop T. Holmes was probably made for his own pleasure and never used. Though more than one hundred years old, it shows no sign of wear. In fact, it is hard to believe that any hunter could have aimed his rifle at such a fine, delicate carving, especially since beach birds can be hunted either by "whistling" the birds down or by sitting quietly on the sand until they

*Sandpiper
Decoy*



flutter in to skitter along the edge of the waves. For these reasons few sandpiper decoys were made or saved, especially after the shorebirds became a protected species.

Yet there is no doubt that this diminutive sandpiper, the smallest of the “stickup” decoys, was made as a decoy. The hole for the prop stick is in the bottom of the bird. When mounted on its “leg,” with the head down and tail up, this sandpiper assumes the lifelike stance of a bird scanning the shallow water for an edible crustacean. Cut from one piece of wood, the body is nicely proportioned, with the wings outlined. A hardwood bill is mortised into the head. The body is a neutral sandy ash color. Since plumage becomes lighter in fall, darker in spring, many decoy painters chose an intermediate hue, suitable for all seasons. A typical dark line runs from the gape through the eye. Instead of painting individual feathers Holmes used a network of light dots to suggest feather tips.

This would have been one of a rig comprising a couple of dozen decoys, carved and mounted in different running, feeding, and standing poses to simulate a natural setting on the beach. The Guennol Collection includes the only Holmes sandpiper decoy known to exist today.

SANDPIPER
by Lothrop T. Holmes

Length, 7 inches
Kingston, Massachusetts, 1870

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

Loon
by Harry Wass

According to Winsor White, the loon was the supreme decoy in his collection. The loon, a solitary bird, was used individually as a decoy, not in company with a large rig. The sight of a lone bird resting on the bosom of a lake gave confidence to a migrating flock of ducks looking for safe shelter. Aside from serving as a confidence decoy, there seems to have been no other use for this great northern diver; the fishy flesh is inedible.

The work is attributed confidently to Harry Wass of Addison, Maine. In 1973 Winsor White, on a trip to Maine, talked with a local lobsterman and guide who had used decoys by Wass, recognized the work, and recalled that Wass had three loon decoys.¹ A photograph of "Uncle Harry," taken in the early 1940s and printed in *Handicrafts of New England*, shows a spare Yankee of advanced age sitting on the steps of his fishing shack, with a group of decoys of similar construction.² The text describes "Uncle Harry" as a man who made hundreds of decoys, had a fine strawberry patch, and always kept a fiddle ready for an evening's entertainment.

The construction of the loon is characteristic of Down East decoys: the low, inlet head, the flat bottom, and the wide beam are all necessary for riding the rough waters of the shores of Maine. The body's sculptural mass offers no extraneous detail of wing or tail. Its simplicity is due to the flowing shape of a diver, the reductive element of its essential form, and the functional requirements of a fine decoy. When the hunter cast his decoy out of the boat into the water, the anchor line



Loon Decoy

attached to the base of the decoy had to unwind without impediment from its wrapping about the bird. The bill, strong and straight, is a natural linear extension of the low, sleek head. The wide breast tapers smoothly to a square tail that is raised slightly to give the decoy a sense of movement. The wood is chestnut.

The loon is painted a brownish gray with lighter tones on the throat and breast to indicate its winter plumage. The uniform blend of color enhances the floating, abstract form that is admired by the contemporary artist as well as the decoy collector.

LOON
by Harry Wass

Length, 26 inches; width, 8½ inches

Addison, Maine, 1910

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, pl. 1; William J. Mackey, Jr., *American Bird Decoys*, New York, 1965, pl. 39; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, p. 18, no. 40.

EXHIBITED: *Initial Loan Exhibition*, Museum of Early American Folk Arts, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 5–November 18, 1962, no. 63; *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–Janu-

ary 9, 1966; *Museum of American Folk Art Exhibition*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 20–November 20, 1966; World's Fair, United States Pavilion, Montreal, 1967; *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 27; *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971, no. 40; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 40.

NOTES

1. Letter from Winsor White to A.B. Martin, October 15, 1973.
2. Allen H. Eaton, *Handicrafts of New England*, New York, 1949, p. 170, pl. 65.

Winter Yellowlegs Decoy *by George Marcus Winslow*

Some carvings that fail to impress at first glance reveal themselves slowly as the essence of expressive art, stripped of unnecessary detail. Such is the yellowlegs decoy by George Marcus Winslow of Duxbury, Massachusetts. Made about 1835, it is the oldest “stickup” decoy in the Guennol Collection.

The bird is not large; it is a “lesser” yellowlegs, a little over nine inches long. It probably took Winslow no more than a couple of hours to carve—but he had been carving for a lifetime. The upswept tail and low, cocked head are positioned vitally and accurately. On the beach a yellowlegs moves in and out of this tipped attitude in seconds. Close observation was necessary to catch this fleeting motion. In fact, the decoy may have been fashioned from a piece of driftwood picked up on the beach. Many of the early decoys evolved from “found” material that suggested a bird shape; the carver simply refined the wood to reveal the bird more fully and added a beak.

Winslow devised a simple, ingenious method to simulate the herringbone pattern of the feathers. He sharpened a chisel and walked it up and down the bird. Then he painted a soft, gray tone on the back—with a light wash on the throat, breast, and tail—to suggest the pale winter plumage.

Few shorebird decoys of this vintage have been found in their original condition. It is astonishing that anyone, even a “Winslow” from Massachusetts, would have saved and cherished this decoy. In its day this yellowlegs must have been accompanied by at least two dozen similar birds in order to make a proper group for a lifelike setting on the shores of Plymouth Harbor.



*Winter
Yellowlegs
Decoy*

WINTER YELLOWLEGS DECOY
by George Marcus Winslow

Length, 9½ inches
Duxbury, Massachusetts, 1835

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, p. 136, pl. 118; Hal Sorenson, *Decoy Collector's Guide*, October–December 1965, p. 12.

EXHIBITED:: *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966.

Golden Plover Decoy

by A. Elmer Crowell

The Guennol Collection includes four bird carvings by A. Elmer Crowell (1862–1951): the golden plover decoy, a black-breasted plover, a yellowlegs, and a wood duck. On September 20, 1914, the *Boston Globe* stated flatly that connoisseurs recognized the birds by A. E. Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts, as the “best decoys produced by hand in any workshop.” Today it is acknowledged that Crowell birds made between 1910 and 1930 are indeed without peer.

Crowell whittled his first lifesize duck decoys—blacks and whistlers—when he was fourteen, and he continued to carve and hunt until 1944, when rheumatism crippled his hands. In those fifty-odd years he recorded every variety of wild bird that migrated along the eastern flyway and rested on the neighboring ponds, fields, and shores of Cape Cod. He carved songbirds as well as wildfowl. In summer his shed was ankle-deep in shavings. In winter the shavings fed the potbellied stove. He carved for his own pleasure, sold decoys and “decoratives” to hunting companions, and made realistic studies for friends and miniatures for birdcages. Many East Harwich neighbors remember Elmer vividly as a round, ruddy-faced man with twinkling blue eyes, who liked to sit with his hands folded on his plump stomach, telling tales of the time when he was young, skinny, and a crack shot.

He observed birds in action and in Audubon prints. First he drew his birds, then made patterns, choosing his wood carefully. He preferred aged white cedar cut in winter when the sap was dry. His equipment was minimal: ax, jackknife, rasp, and sandpaper. All birds received two prime coats of paint. The finished coat was laid on with a variety of techniques. He stippled and dotted; he dabbed with a dry brush for texture and a full brush to produce a pebbly surface; he drew fine lines, soft or hard edged. His basic palette contained black, white, amber, and sienna. The result was a rich, deep plumage, for which he was justly renowned.

Many Crowell birds made after 1915 are branded with his own brand, which gives undisputed authentication, although Crowell’s style speaks for itself. The brand is an oval, three and one-eighth by one and seven-eighths inches. The top line reads, “A. Elmer Crowell”; the bottom line, “East Harwich, Mass.”; the center, simply, “Decoys.” After 1925 a rectangular stamp that impressed the same information was also used.

Crowell made few golden plover decoys because few were needed. The “golden” in fall migration rarely touched land. The birds nested and raised their young in summer in the Arctic, and in August they assembled in flocks and proceeded to Nova Scotia, where they took off

*Golden
Plover
Decoy*



over the open water of the Atlantic in a straight course, three thousand miles to the pampas of Argentina, unless a storm blew them off course and they came down in such places as Nantucket Island and Cape Cod, where they responded readily to well-placed decoys.

Although not extinct, golden plover flocks are greatly reduced today. During the years of indiscriminate shooting, disaster hit. On their return trip north in the spring the golden plovers followed the inland route, up the Mississippi River, where they were easy targets even without the use of decoys. On March 11, 1821, John J. Audubon, while visiting New Orleans, reported sighting "hundreds of thousands" of golden plovers. In nine days shooting he wrote that "144,000 must have been destroyed."¹

The golden plover in the collection is from Crowell's best early period. Carved from one piece of wood, each contour conveys the softness of a live bird. The head is raised and gently turned. The wing tips are free, lightly grooved and serrated. The gleaming plumage of deep umber is accented on the back with touches of green gold. This eight-inch "golden," the smallest of the plovers, is a rare gem.

GOLDEN PLOVER DECOY
by A. Elmer Crowell

Length, 8 inches
East Harwich, Massachusetts, 1918

EX COLL.: Adele Earnest, Stony Point, New York.

NOTE

1. Donald Culross Peattie, ed., *Audubon's America*, Boston, 1940, p. 168.

Black-breasted Plover and Yellowlegs
by A. Elmer Crowell

In the 1920s, after shorebird shooting was outlawed, A. Elmer Crowell turned his talents to carving birds for the home rather than decoys for the beach. Known as “ornamentals,” they were beautifully proportioned, naturalistic studies of the wildfowl that frequented the local shores and marshes. In this type of work Crowell had more freedom in his choice of poses than in the carving of decoys—which must avoid conveying an attitude of alarm. Also, since Crowell mounted his realistic birds on tall, delicate, realistic legs, he was able to achieve a grace impossible in a decoy, which is mounted on a stick. Yet Crowell did not overdo the lifelike effect. He sensed that abstraction was necessary in all art, and he did not strain to paint and carve every feather.

The Guennol black-breasted plover is just such an “ornamental,” a handsome, full-bodied, stout bird, sometimes called a beetlehead, bullhead, or toadhead for obvious reasons. In summer plumage, as depicted here, the plover wears a scarf of pure white over the head and down the sides of the neck, in vivid contrast to the black throat and breast. The rump is white. The coverts and primaries show a rich palette of umber tones, touched with light values. The wing tips are painted with Crowell’s characteristic V-shaped accents.

The plover was a favorite with Crowell partly because it was so effective as a decoy. Many varieties, even some sandpipers, “come in” to the plover but the plover responds only to its own kind.

In contrast to the black-breasted plover, the Crowell yellowlegs “ornamental” is long, slender, and light breasted. Both yellowlegs and plover are from Crowell’s best period, in the 1920s. Each bird is in fine original condition, mounted on a carved quahog shell, and stamped with the well-known A. E. Crowell brand.

The striking, angled position of the yellowlegs shows Elmer's accurate observation of nature. A shorebird spends most of its time in this pose, looking for food as it runs up and down the beach. The lowered head causes the back to hump slightly and the underside of the tail to drop in counterbalance. The brownish black feathering is beautifully rendered, highlighted by a series of dots placed at geometric intervals on the back and at random on the sides. Wing tips are painted as well as carved. The eye socket is recessed and shadowed. The breast and underside of the neck show typical Crowell wedge-shaped brush marks. Today the colors on both birds are softer than when they were new. Black ages to an appealing, warm, rusty tone, and white mellows.

Crowell shorebirds are scarce, although hundreds must have been made. Two generations ago many a summer cottage on Cape Cod displayed a Crowell carving on the whatnot shelf. Those same birds, if still intact, are now stored in local bank vaults when houses are closed for the winter.

*Black-breasted
Plover*





BLACK-BREASTED PLOVER AND YELLOWLEGS
by A. Elmer Crowell

Plover: Height, 9 inches

Yellowlegs: Length, about 13½ inches

East Harwich, Massachusetts, about 1930

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

EXHIBITED: *Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966; *Museum of American Folk Art Exhibition*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 20–November 20, 1966.

Wood Duck

by A. Elmer Crowell

A. Elmer Crowell liked wood ducks. This naturalistic, life-size wood duck (not a decoy) stands majestically on its two webbed feet, which are placed firmly on a simple, rounded green wood base.

The crest, the mandarin masklike face, and the iridescent colors have an oriental aspect. The head, a bronzed green with beads of light paint outlining the forehead, is turned to the right, creating a rhythmic body movement. A distinctive white head patch starts behind the eye, embraces the throat, and curves delicately behind the neck. The rich chestnut breast is spotted with white. Light edging marks the primaries. A blue green wing patch rides the dark shoulders. The bill is white with black on the ridge and tip, and lacquered on the base. In a few areas—noticeably on the breast—the paint has cracked from excessive heat. The authentic Crowell brand is stamped on the base.

The wood duck as an ornamental or a decoy carving is rare and highly prized. Hardly any wood duck decoys were made, because few were needed for hunting; the habitat of the wood duck is woods, not water, and the flesh is inedible. The bird has long been a protected species. Most old-time carvers had little interest in a bird they could neither hunt nor eat.

According to Winsor White, Crowell made only three life-size standing wood ducks in his lifetime, and the Guennol example is the “best wood duck he ever made.”¹

WOOD DUCK by A. Elmer Crowell

Height, 20 inches

East Harwich, Massachusetts, 1950

EX COLL.: Winsor White, Duxbury, Massachusetts.

EXHIBITED: *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966; *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971, no. 38.

NOTE

1. Letter from Winsor White to A.B. Martin, January 4, 1966.



Wood Duck

Great Blue Heron

In the early years of this century it was fashionable to decorate a hall, parlor, or conservatory with a standing crane or heron. Such decor was favored by the Roosevelts, Cabots, and Vanderbilts—the families who hunted, fished, and sailed, and wished to transfer their enthusiasm for the great outdoors to the interiors of their homes. Also during those first decades many naturalists tried to capture the elusive quality of avian grace in paintings and carvings. American bird painters of this period, such as Louis Agassiz Fuertes and John Chapman, received recognition for their achievements, but bird carvers were mostly unknown—partly because many specialized in decoys, and carvers of such functional items were not considered artists.

In Massachusetts, A. Elmer Crowell and another distinguished carver, Joseph Lincoln (1859–1938), made decorative birds, although their reputations were based on their decoys. A splendid blue heron by Crowell is on exhibition at the Heritage Plantation Museum in Sandwich, Massachusetts. The Guennol heron bears a stronger resemblance to the work of Lincoln, who used a combination of wood and canvas and painted in a more stylized manner than Crowell. However, it is still not possible to attribute the Guennol heron to a specific carver, although the construction reflects the work of Cape Cod carvers in the first quarter of the twentieth century.

The heron stands in a watchful position, ready to move. Tall, delicate legs support a beautifully modeled, hollow body that was fashioned of wood covered with canvas—probably sized before it was stretched over the wood as tightly as a skin and then painted. The inner structure can only be guessed at, but hollow frames were usually constructed of ash strips that bent without splitting when steamed.

The famous S-curve of the heron, which has intrigued artists for centuries, is seen in all its elegance when the bird is viewed in profile; the movement begins at the head, with its forceful beak, and continues down the curvaceous neck, along the breast, to the dropped tail. The feathers on the slate gray body are drawn with fine, painted lines that become formalized at the tail in a studied, parallel pattern of dark bands edged with white. The neck is ash white, in contrast to the dark tones of the head and body.

The Guennol great blue heron graced the conservatory of a home in Eastham, Massachusetts, from 1920, when the bird was received as a wedding present. This noble heron combines all the elements of color, form, and attitude that characterize America's most aristocratic bird.



*Great
Blue
Heron*

GREAT BLUE HERON

Attributed to a local Massachusetts carver whose work is similar to that of
A. Elmer Crowell (1862–1951) and Joseph Lincoln (1859–1938)

Height, 40 inches

Eastham, Massachusetts, 1925

Bluebill Decoy *by Lemuel T. Ward and Stephen Ward*

Lemuel T. Ward, the last and most revered of the old-time decoy carvers, still enjoys life in Chrisfield, Maryland, on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, an area famous for its abundant variety of game. His brother, Stephen, who collaborated with Lem in the making of decoys, died on February 23, 1976.

Lem made his first decoy in 1920 when he was twenty-four. In the 1930s, during the Depression, quality decoys were at a premium as out-of-work neighbors took to hunting in order to enjoy the outdoors and to increase the family food supply. Lem and Steve filled the local demand for decoys. During the next thirty years the brothers made hundreds of duck and goose decoys in their spare time, whenever their regular business at the barbershop slackened off.

The bluebill hen in the Guennol Collection is a rare example from the brothers' first years of decoy carving, when they still followed the style of their father, Travis Ward, but were beginning to develop an original, creative approach that combined the essential look of the bird with the functional requirements of a decoy. The high mound of its humpback was designed for good visibility on the water. The flat, oval bottom—made from a split log—insured stability. (The base still shows the original hatchet marks. Later the brothers bought a band saw.) The short, stubby tail is a natural continuation line of the high back and a perfect watershed. The head, set in from the breast for protection, faces slightly to the right. The high, narrow forehead, fat cheeks, and broad, upswept flaring bill are qualities that intensify the bold, sculptural image of this magnificent bird, but they are actually simple exaggerations of normal features, made to catch the attention of birds rather than man's admiration.

As Lem Ward put it, "In those days I did a lot of lookin' with my shootin' " The surfaces are worn down to the wood so that the natural



*Bluebill
Decoy*

graining shows, suggesting a feather pattern. Most of the body paint has disappeared, although the breast and head retain the original, reddish brown color. On the face, a belt of white frames the base of the bill, which is slate blue with a center streak of a darker hue.

It is said that Steve did the carving and Lem the painting. Whatever the combination, the two men, in their prime, created what Joel Barber rightly called "floating sculpture."¹ In 1959, after conservation laws restricted the hunting of wildfowl, the demand for handmade decoys ceased. The Wards, who loved to carve and paint and to experiment, were lured into the profitable production of elaborate, realistic carvings for the library table.

The Ward bluebill in the Guennol Collection is a superb example of decoy art, a unique category of folk art that was the product of a certain time and place in American art history that will probably never come again.

BLUEBILL DECOY
by Lemuel T. Ward and Stephen Ward

Length, 13 inches

PROVENANCE: Chrisfield, Maryland, 1930.

EX COLL.: Adele Earnest, Stony Point, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, pp. 123, 184, pls. 106, 160, 161.

EXHIBITED: *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966.

NOTE

1. Joel Barber, *Wild Fowl Decoys*, New York, 1954, p. x.

Canada Goose Decoy
by Lemuel T. Ward and Stephen Ward

The Canada goose decoy by the famed Wards dates from the same early period as the bluebill, when the brothers were carving decoys strictly for their own gunning use. That was before they went public, sold to sportsmen, and began to make ornamental birds and miniatures as well as working decoys. Hardly any geese from this first period are to be found; a goose rig is smaller in number than a set of ducks.

The Guennol goose, a rare survivor and long the cynosure of en-

*Canada
Goose
Decoy*



vious collectors, is as sound and majestic as the day it was in use. The body, hewn from a block of cedar, is flat bottomed, narrow in the chest, and broad in the beam to make it seaworthy. (The more surface that rides the water, the more stable the bird.) Topside, the low breast and nape dramatize the lift of the neck, the turned head, and the sweep of the back. The tail picks up the angle of the dead rise and projects boldly above the back ridge. This is sculpture, wrought with hatchet and knife by a man who could create elemental and evocative shapes and explore the rhythm of the interrelationship. No extraneous detail here, no distraction, no fancy feathering. The head is full-cheeked, the eye sockets grooved. Only the contour of the bill is outlined. Weather, tide, and wind have worn the original paint to soft grays, blacks, and natural wood tones. The outlines of white patches on cheek and breast, and under the tail coverts, are discernible. A lead weight, hammered to the bottom, is centered up front. Most decoys with a turned head list in the direction of the turn and the weight has to be placed off center as a counterbalance. This is not necessary on the Ward decoy, where all elements balance naturally.

CANADA GOOSE DECOY
by Lemuel T. Ward and Stephen Ward

Length, 23½ inches
Chrisfield, Maryland, about 1930

EX COLL.: Stony Point Folk Art Gallery, Stony Point, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, p. 182, pl. 159.

EXHIBITED: *The Art of the Decoy*, Museum of American Folk Art, New York, November 24, 1965–January 9, 1966.

Huntsman

Most folk carvings were made to be used, but a number were designed primarily for decorative purposes, as was this huntsman with his gun, game bird, and dog.

Fully carved in the round and polychromed, the man stands erect; the severity of his stiff formal pose is cheered by the six prominent yellow buttons on his short, black jacket. The overlarge head is usual in country carvings, where size is more indicative of the importance of the subject than of relative, realistic proportions. Facial features are cut in



Huntsman

low relief, and the eyes regard the world with the familiar astonished stare of many primitive portraits. The hair, neatly parted in the center, falls forward slightly over the forehead. The huntsman's trusty gun leans against his side, and in his right hand he holds two dead birds, oversize like the bird in the hunter's typical tall tale. At the master's feet stands the traditional black-and-white spotted dog. A tree trunk serves as background.

The hunter was a popular subject in paintings, prints, and carvings of the middle and late nineteenth century when wildfowling provided food for the table as well as sport. Although extant carvings are rare, the condition of this work is excellent: there is only one slight restoration to the top of the head, and it is barely visible. The paint is in that original, aged state cherished by the folk art connoisseur. A similar hunting group, minus tree and bird, is illustrated in *American Folk Art in Wood, Metal and Stone* by Jean Lipman.¹ Both works date from the same era and each is mounted on a small, footed base.

This carving is an important addition to the Guennol folk art collection and a delightful, vigorous expression of country life rendered in a country manner.

HUNTSMAN

Height, 19 inches

Pennsylvania, about 1860

EX COLL.: Mrs. Ernst Behrend, Greenwich, Connecticut.

NOTE

1. Jean Lipman, *American Folk Art in Wood, Metal and Stone*, New York, 1948, p. 142, pl. 155.

Whale and Whalers

New Bedford, Massachusetts—where the Guennol carving was made—was the center of America's whaling industry in the nineteenth century. "Thar' she blows!" were magic words that transformed the sordid business of whaling into an inspiring life-and-death struggle. Many painters, including Winslow Homer, depicted the romance and drama of whaling, and Herman Melville wrote the classic *Moby Dick*. Scrimshaw engravings illustrated the facts and fancies of the seaman's life, yet few sculptures told of the heroic saga of whaling.

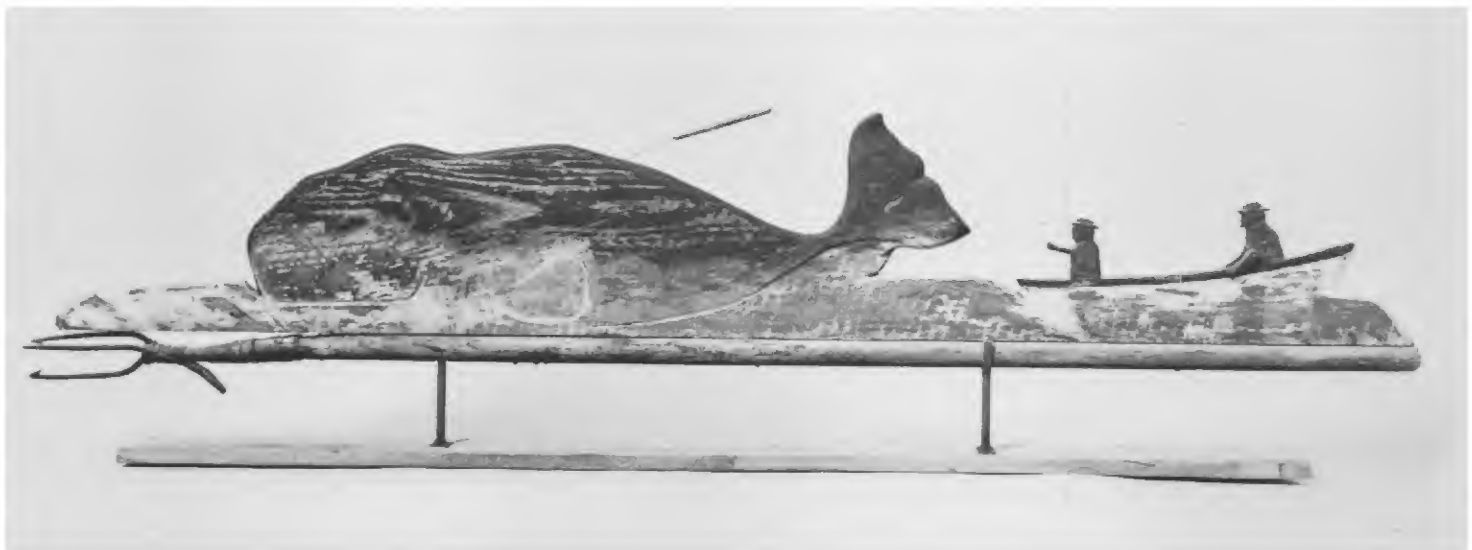
The unique Guennol whaling scene is carved from one wood plank over six feet long, twelve inches wide, and one inch thick. The shape of the mammoth black whale dominates the sculpture; its wide tail flares dangerously near the small dory, which pitches precariously as it carries two men. The whale has already been harpooned—the simulated harpoon is indicated by a small rod embedded in the whale and attached to a wire. The “Nantucket sleigh ride,” when the whale dives for its life, is about to begin.

The section of the carving that extends in front of the whale’s blunt nose and behind the boat represents the sea. The entire panel is mounted horizontally on an actual harpoon that is fitted at one end with a three-pronged barbed iron socket. An instrument of this sort was thrust into the vital organs of the whale after the initial harpoon had been thrown. Twine, still bearing traces of tar, is wrapped about the iron socket and braided into a loop to which the retrieving line was attached.

Carver and date are unknown, but the scene has the feeling of a memory piece, possibly made by a retired whaler. The fact that the wood was cut with a circular, rather than a straight, saw, and fastened to the harpoon with wood pegs rather than nails, helps to place the carving in the 1880s or earlier. The black paint on the whale, on the trim of the dory, and on the two whalers has worn bare in spots, but the boat and the sea still retain traces of the original gray blue color. Outlines of the whale and the fins are lightly incised. The original use of the panel can only be surmised. There is no pivotal balance or weathering to suggest that it was a weathervane. Perhaps, like other pictorial panels, it was hung indoors, over a mantel, in lieu of a painting.

Whale and whalers traveled to Expo '70 in Osaka, Japan, where it was exhibited in the United States Pavilion. This rare and historic carving is a recent addition to the Guennol Collection of American folk art.

Whale and Whalers



WHALE AND WHALERS

Height, 15 inches; length, 76 inches

New Bedford, Massachusetts, about 1880

EX COLL.: Robert Hallock, Newtown, Connecticut.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Frederick J. Dockstader, "Folk Arts, Cross Country," *Art in America*, 58, March 1970, p. 74; Robert Hallock, "Weathervanes: Native American Sculpture," *Lithopinion*, 11, Summer 1973, pp. 46, 47.

EXHIBITED: *Initial Loan Exhibition, Museum of Early American Folk Arts*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 5–November 18, 1962, no. 12; Expo '70, United States Pavilion, Osaka, Japan, 1970.

Bird Tree

by "Schtockschnitzler" Simmons

"Schtockschnitzler" Simmons carved this bird tree in the early years of this century. No one today can recall his first name or home town, but it is known that he traveled the roads of Berks County, Pennsylvania, with two other itinerant peddlers: "Huns" ("Dog") John and "Schuhbutzen" ("Doormat") Fritz. John sold homeless tramp dogs; Fritz, doormats made of woven cornhusks; Simmons made bird trees and single birds mounted on cut-off bedposts and, as a sideline, produced canes with a bird on the handgrip. Today, the bird trees are considered Simmons's masterpieces and they grace the folk art collections of the Henry Francis Du Pont Winterthur Museum, Delaware; the Henry Ford Museum at Greenfield Village, Michigan; the Essex Institute, the Historical Society Museum of Berks County, Pennsylvania; and the Guennol Collection.

Sometimes the tree was a slim wood pedestal in which branches were inserted, and on which birds perched. It is possible that the Guennol tree was adapted from dogwood: Simmons liked dogwood because it became strong and rigid when dried. The birds—ten in all—are placed in alternating series on the boughs with the smallest bird, only three inches, at the bottom; the size of the birds increases toward the top.

All the songbirds are gaily colored. Yellow and orange predominate, with accents of red and black. The bodies are simple, pleasing bird forms of unidentifiable species. Some display modeled wings or a



*Bird
Tree*

pretty, scalloped tail. The tree itself, a vibrant green, stands on a red-and-green base. All is shellacked and shining, ready to adorn a table or a mantel.

Whittling was the liveliest of the folk arts in Pennsylvania. The Germans who settled its fertile valleys around Reading, Lancaster, and Carlisle came from the Rhineland or Switzerland where wood carving was a proud tradition. Since it was folly to throw anything away, a rich inheritance is found in the countryside of William Penn's state.

The bird tree as a three-dimensional, freestanding figure is rare, although the motif is often seen as decoration, on other Pennsylvania folk arts: on door towels, samplers, slipware, fracturs, and painted furniture. As a concept, the bird tree is a variation of the ancient theme of the tree of life, which has appeared in many cultures in many lands. Its source is unknown but it is reasonable to guess that it originated in an arid country of the East, where a cool garden meant heaven on earth and bliss was a tree with birds singing. The image traveled from the East to West, from the hills of Jordan up along the trade routes of the Danube to the Rhenish countries—and to Pennsylvania, where it found its way into the Guennol Collection.

Simmons, the carver, was probably unaware of these wonders of history, but he knew his country customers and his bird trees. He could trade a carving for a hot supper, and that was enough for him—and for us.

BIRD TREE
by "Schtockschnitzler" Simmons

Height, 21½ inches
Berks County, Pennsylvania, early 20th century

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Richard S. Machmer and Rosemarie Machmer, "The Birds of 'Schtockschnitzler' Simmons," *The Historical Review of Berks County*, Spring 1974, pp. 58, 59, 79.

Eagle
by Wilhelm Schimmel

Of all Pennsylvania folk art carvers the most renowned is Wilhelm Schimmel (1817–1890). Like Simmons, he was an itinerant who followed the route of the taverns to trade his carved birds and animals for food, drink, and shelter, and was not honored in his own lifetime. Few facts of his personal life are known. He emigrated from Hesse-Darmstadt,



Germany, sometime after the Civil War, and lived in the Cumberland Valley near Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He died in the Cumberland Valley Alms House. A photograph of a gruff, bleary-eyed man survives.

Schimmel produced a menagerie of parrots, chickens, roosters, lions, squirrels, dogs, and eagles, plus a few “people” carvings that include Adam and Eve in a garden complete with apple tree and serpent, surrounded by a picket fence. The carvings are not realistic. They are vigorous, elemental interpretations made by a man with little patience for detailed decoration, but with a sure sense of anatomy. A jackknife was his main tool, and he never sanded, retouched, or reworked. (It is reported that he smoothed edges with a piece of glass.) Today, a Schimmel sculpture is a requisite for any serious collector of American folk art.

Schimmel’s eagles are supreme. The carvings vary in size, from the toy of a few inches to the heroic Guennol bird with a wingspread of nearly three feet. All have a family resemblance. Their size depended upon the wood that Schimmel could salvage from the floor of Sam Bloser’s carpentry shop, north of Carlisle.

The upright pose of the Guennol eagle lends dramatic force to the flare of the wings, the prominent breast, and the oversize, powerful feet that grasp the green base with each separate and distinct talon. The erect, crested head is turned to accentuate the lift of the wings (which were made separately and pegged to the body.) On the front of

the bird, Schimmel carved his typical crosshatch pattern, creating a zigzag texture that simulates feathers. The markings are roughly repetitive except for the lower sections of the wings, where uniformity of size and shape was not maintained, but broken into random units. On the back the feathering is indicated by rows of deeply incised loops. The paint is barn red with touches of black and a vestige of yellow green on the beak and claws. The rear tail feathers are edged in mustard yellow.

Schimmel's work is not to be confused with that of Aaron Mountz (1873–1949), another Pennsylvania carver said to have been influenced by the master. Mountz also carved birds and beasts in a similar crosshatch technique, but his strokes are more uniform and shallow. His birds are also gentler—less fierce—than those of Schimmel.

The eagle had been a popular subject since 1782, when Congress approved the eagle as our symbol in the seal of the United States, yet it is doubtful that Schimmel produced eagles for patriotic reasons. He was a nonconformist and must have liked the bird; perhaps he even felt an affinity with the hawkish, craggy creature. It is interesting that his birds resemble the European Hapsburg eagle rather than the usually accepted American versions seen on ship figureheads or in the decorative architectural emblems wrought by Samuel McIntire, William Rush, and John Bellamy. Schimmel may never have realized that the American eagle was based on our native bald eagle. Probably it would have made no difference. Schimmel's eagle was a memory image set in his mind, at an earlier time, in another country.

The Guennol eagle came from the Long Island home of Henry Francis Du Pont, whose museum in Winterthur, Delaware, is world famous for its collection of American antique furniture and furnishings.

EAGLE
by Wilhelm Schimmel

Wingspread, 33½ inches
Carlisle, Pennsylvania, 1870

EX COLL.: Henry F. Du Pont, Southampton, New York.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Jean Lipman and Alice Winchester, *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, 1974, p. 180, no. 243, ill. p. 183.

EXHIBITED: *The Flowering of American Folk Art (1776–1876)*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, February 1–March 24, 1974, no. 243.

Tree of Life

Pennsylvania German mystical images, dominant in designs on furniture, in sgraffito decoration on redware, and in fractur painting, are hardly ever seen in three-dimensional form. The Guennol tree of life wood carving is a rare expression of Pennsylvania German folk sculpture.

This is the tree of eternal life, not to be confused with the tree of knowledge in the Garden of Eden that tempted Adam and Eve with its apple and serpent. Each element is symbolic. The Guennol tree blossoms with roses. The rose represents Christ, who, as the conqueror of death, achieved immortality. Christ's two natures, the divine and the human, were interpreted metaphorically as the lily and the rose.

The Guennol tree has a presence out of all proportion to its small size. The trunk forms a spiral twist before it branches into a dome-shaped bower. Its carved branches bear flat, serrated green leaves. Eight roses and three rosebuds adorn the branches in irregular notation. Age has crazed and darkened the green paint on tree trunk, limbs, and base, and softened the rosy tone of the flowers and the two delicate red-breasted turtle doves who perch beneath the spread of the boughs. The birds are outsize in relation to the tree, and present a third recognizable motif. The larger one stands for Christ, the heavenly mate, for whom the other is longing.

The date of this tree of life can probably be placed in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, when these specific images figured significantly in life at the Ephrata Cloisters in Pennsylvania and when Transcendentalism was flourishing. The Simmons bird tree in the Guennol Collection is of a later date—the early twentieth century. By then the bird tree had lost most of its religious symbolism and had become a secular, decorative object.

TREE OF LIFE

Height, about 14 $\frac{5}{16}$ inches

Ephrata-Lancaster region, Pennsylvania, 1775–1800



*Tree
of Life*

Two Tigers

by Augustus Aaron Wilson

The Guennol Collection features two tigers by Augustus Aaron Wilson (1864–1950). Old Maine residents still remember Gus as keeper of the Spring Point Lighthouse in Penobscot Harbor, Maine, until 1934, when he retired after nearly twenty years of service. He whittled six days a week, decoys; eider ducks, scoters, whistlers, and seagulls, as well as whimsies. After his wife died he thought of carving a woman, “dress and all,” to put in a rocking chair to keep him company. He never did. In 1931 the Ringling Brothers’ circus came to Portland and brought the largest tiger in captivity, the “one and only” Emyr, who measured sixteen feet from tip of tail to nose. It is said that Wilson didn’t see Emyr but the daily paper printed pictures of the tiger and Gus was inspired.

Stashed in his shed were salvaged spar buoys, old-fashioned railroad ties, and sections of discarded telephone poles. This wood he found suitable, and after several weeks he brought forth a five-foot-long tiger, which he showed proudly to a neighbor who said, “That’s the goddamndest thing I ever saw. It’s too skinny!” A deflated Wilson found a fatter piece of wood and carved a fatter tiger. No one liked that one either.

Today three large Wilson tigers are known to exist: the two in the Guennol Collection and a third owned by Mrs. John Laurent, daughter-in-law of the artist Robert Laurent, who originally owned the three. The smaller of the Guennol tigers, the black-and-gray one, may have been the first carved by Wilson—the “skinny” one. He or she (there is no way of knowing) is a handsome, loveable beast. The body is hewn from a rounded spar or pole and mounted squarely on four stalwart legs with pad feet. The head, facing straight on, has naturalistic features: red-and-yellow eyes, wire whiskers, and a mouth appropriately red and open, with fangs showing.

The larger, black-and-tawny tiger, is definitely male. He was probably carved later than the gray one: there is more modeling and movement in the body. One rear leg stretches back. The head is raised in a growl position, accentuated by lowered ears and wide-open jaws that bare an impressive set of teeth. He sports bristle whiskers.

The painting on both animals is elementary yet very tigerish. Gus knew little about paints. He used what was on the shelf, whether automobile or boat paint. He never read labels. As to brushstrokes, they were laid on just as they came off the brush. The black stripes on the gray tiger are fairly uniform. On the larger cat the stripes vary in thickness and density, and follow contour lines. Both tigers have a light vest and underbelly.



Two Tigers

It is remarkable that Wilson could carve or paint at all. His fingers were stubby, gnarled from rheumatism, and covered with scar tissue from the slippage of his knife. He never owned a vise, but held the wood in his hands or between his knees. His simple tools included a hatchet, a three-quarter chisel, a ten-cent Boy Scout knife, and a small block plane. He didn't use patterns, but he kept everything in his head. Not restricted by copy or convention, his tigers were his own.

This may explain why the carvings were unappreciated and unaccepted in his time. They didn't look like the fancy animals on the merry-go-round in Portland, or like the pictures of Emyr in the newspaper. In addition, since Gus was considered an eccentric by his neighbors, anything he produced was dismissed as eccentric.

In Gus's day he couldn't give the tigers away, but recently both Guennol tigers have been exhibited in New York at the Museum of American Folk Art, The Brooklyn Museum, and The Metropolitan Museum of Art.

What has made the difference? The tigers are the same. Is it just a matter of the right time and place or a change in the way of seeing? Is the strict line between folk art and fine art being erased? Whatever the answer this gleaming pair of tigers is now recognized as the proud contribution to our heritage from a lonely and loving man.

TWO TIGERS

by Augustus Aaron Wilson

Portland, Maine, 1931

EX COLL.: Robert Laurent, Ogunquit, Maine.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: "Assistant Light Keeper an Ardent Admirer of the Tiger," (Portland) *Maine Sunday Telegram*, January 4, 1931; Benjamin H. Gaylord, "Gus Wilson: Maine's Elmer Crowell," *North American Decoys*, Winter 1975; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, 1976, p. 80, no. 66; Lynn Franklin, "The Carver That Maine Overlooked," (Portland) *Maine Sunday Telegram*, April 25, 1976.

EXHIBITED: *The Guennol Collection*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, November 6, 1969–January 4, 1970, no. 30; *American Folk Art of the 18th & 19th Centuries*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, January 31–March 14, 1971, nos. 47, 48; *Folk Sculpture USA*, The Brooklyn Museum, New York, March 6–May 31, 1976, no. 66.

GRAY-AND-BLACK TIGER

Height, 24 inches; length, 68 inches

EXHIBITED: *Collection of Robert and Mimi Laurent*, Indiana University Art Museum, Bloomington, April 1965; Colby College, Waterville, Maine, October 1965, no. 17; Museum of American Folk Art (Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building), New York, October 20–November 20, 1966.

ORANGE-AND-BLACK TIGER

Height, 35½ inches; length, 79 inches

Flying Canada Goose by Ira Hudson

The 1979 auction at Sotheby Parke Bernet of American folk art from the collection of Stewart E. Gregory was a landmark sale, shattering previous records and establishing new highs: \$30,000 for a folk art



*Flying
Canada
Goose*

carving, the *Bust of Captain Starbuck*; \$25,000 for an Indian weathervane; \$12,000 for a decoy, a Canada goose.

As a curtain call to the Guennol folk art collection the Martins bagged four prizes, four major wood carvings: a whale shop sign, a giraffe's head that had resided on the Gregory bar for years, a charming ram, and the celebrated flying Canada goose.

The goose, the epitome of American folk art sculpture and the star of any collection, was the masterpiece of the carver, Ira Hudson. Hudson was a Virginian—a boat builder, hunting guide, and decoy maker. He carved practical objects such as dories, duck decoys, and, in this unique case, a sign for a hunting club.

Hudson knew the look of Canada geese in flight, and he knew his tools and his craft. The carving is life-size. The bold, vertical thrust of the spread wings, each of which is cut individually from a slab of wood and angled slightly, contrasts dramatically with the massive body and with the head. The beak is parted as if the bird were honking. Wing edges are scalloped and incised to suggest feathering. A brown hue is laid over a gray undercoat and scored to indicate the patterns of the plumage, while an ash white color lightens the cheeks, the underbelly, and underwings. Portions of the paint have been restored.

FLYING CANADA GOOSE

by Ira Hudson

Length, 42½ inches; wingspread, 60 inches

Chincoteague, Virginia, 1876–1949

PROVENANCE: A hunting lodge sign, said to have been located on Revel Island, Virginia.

EX COLL.: Adele Earnest, Stony Point, New York; Stewart E. Gregory, Wilton, Connecticut; sale, Sotheby Parke Bernet, Inc., New York, January 27, 1979, no. 195.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Adele Earnest, *The Art of the Decoy*, New York, 1965, no. 67, ill. p. 78; Jean Herzberg Lipman, "Living with Antiques: Stewart Gregory's Connecticut Barn," *Antiques*, 99, January, 1971, ill. pp. 115, 118; Robert Bishop, *American Folk Sculpture*, New York, 1974, no. 551, ill. p. 299.

EXHIBITED: *Initial Loan Exhibition, Museum of Early American Folk Arts*, Exhibition Center, Time-Life Building, New York, October 5–November 18, 1962, no. 6.

*Paintings by
Albert Pinkham Ryder*

SARAH FAUNCE

Paintings by Albert Pinkham Ryder

Although naïve art of Mexican folk painters and an exceptional collection of the work of Justin McCarthy, a contemporary “primitive” painter, comprise the bulk of the Guennol Collection of the American paintings, there are also three paintings by a renowned American artist of the nineteenth century, Albert Pinkham Ryder. The three Ryders span the years from about 1880—those of the artist’s early maturity, when he was first developing his characteristic style—to the late 1890s—Ryder’s most productive time as a painter.

Ryder was born in 1847 in the whaling port of New Bedford, Massachusetts, to an old Cape Cod family. In 1870 the family moved to New York, where the artist lived for the rest of his life. He studied at the National Academy of Design, but his principal medium of exhibition was a more liberal organization founded in 1877—the Society of American Artists. He did not travel abroad, apart from one visit to London in 1877, until 1882, when at the age of thirty-five he was already a fully formed and highly subjective artist. In his later years, this subjective quality was heightened by an isolated, eccentric lifestyle. His work was modestly recognized in his middle years, but its intensely personal nature attracted greater attention from the modernist generation of artists during the years before his death in 1917.

Though Ryder was not a member of any formal artists’ group, his work takes its place as part of the Symbolist mood that prevailed at the turn of the century. His use of literary themes, his love of the nocturne, his obsession with such evocative images as the isolated boat on a moonlit sea all provide links with this international movement, and account for his continuing appeal for those who admire the visionary and highly expressive in painting. In this way the three Ryder paintings are not isolated within the Guennol Collection, but are related to the folk painting of an earlier era and to the art of the modern “primitive” artist Justin McCarthy.

The Lovers' Boat

Moonlight, *Moonlight on the Waters*, *The Smugglers*, and *Smuggler's Cove* are among the variety of other titles under which this picture has been exhibited and recorded. Because the painter, Albert Pinkham Ryder, never dated his paintings and seldom gave them formal titles, it is often easy to confuse one with another in the early records, and difficult to establish the chronology of his work as a whole. The history of this painting shows it to be one of the earliest examples of themes that were to preoccupy the artist throughout his life: the nocturne at sea, the boat on moonlit water.

The collector Frederick Fairchild Sherman published his painting in the first monograph on Ryder in 1920, when it was in the collection of Ralph Cudney of Chicago, as *The Smugglers*. (In the catalogue of The Museum of Modern Art's 1930 exhibition of Winslow Homer, Ryder, and Thomas Eakins, it was called *The Smuggler's Cove*. Another painting, called *Moonlight* [eleven by eleven inches], listed under Miscellaneous, no. 136, was clearly not known to Sherman as having been in the Conklin [*sic*] sale of 1905.) It has since been established that a painting called *The Lovers' Boat* was bought by the Reverend N.W. Conkling some years before 1900,¹ and that an untitled picture (no. 52) lent by Reverend Conkling to the exhibition at the Society of American Artists in March–April 1881 was accompanied by the following poem by Ryder:

In splendor rare, the moon,
In full-orbed splendor,
On sea and darkness making light,
While windy spaces and night,
In all vastness, did make,
With cattled hill and lake,
A scene grand and lovely,
Then, gliding above the
Dark water, a lovers' boat,
In quiet beauty, did float
Upon the scene, mingling shadows
Into the deeper shadows
Of sky and land reflected.

According to Ida Ely Rubin, no other Ryder lent by Conkling and no other Ryder called *The Lovers' Boat* was listed in the catalogues of any of the Society of American Artists' exhibitions; and the Conkling auction sale in 1905 included no other Ryder that would fit this title, so it seems practically certain that the present picture is the one exhibited in 1881.²



The Lovers' Boat

Thus *The Lovers' Boat* is a significant work of about 1880, when Ryder turned from his earlier, primarily pastoral subjects to the more visionary themes characteristic of his maturity.³ Though still somewhat naturalistic in relation to the later nocturnal marinescapes, the ghostly quality of the lovers' boat—a most poetic image—and the intensity of the moonlight place the painting on a more subjective and romantic plane. The picture may also be one of the earliest to be accompanied by one of Ryder's own poems.

THE LOVERS' BOAT

Oil on panel. Signed lower left, in red paint: A.P. RYDER

Height, 11¾ inches; width, 12 inches

EX COLL.: Reverend N.W. Conkling, New York; Sarah B. Conkling Sale, New York, February 10, 1905, no. 98; E.B. Greenshields, Montreal; Ralph Cudney, Chicago; William T. Cresmer, Chicago; Mrs. Jacob H. Rand, New York; purchased by Hirschl & Adler Galleries, Inc., New York, 1956.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Henry Eckford (pseudonym for Charles de Kay), "A Modern Colorist," *Century Magazine*, June 1890, p. 257; Joseph Lewis French, "Albert P. Ryder," *Broadway Magazine*, September 1905, p. 7; *American Art News*, June 15, 1918, p. 1, ill.; Frederic Fairchild Sherman, *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, New York, 1920, nos. 27, 136, ill. p. 35; Frederic Newlin Price, *Ryder*, New York, 1932, pp. xx–xxi, pl. 110; Lloyd Goodrich, *Albert Ryder*, New York, 1959, p. 114, pl. 12; *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1961, no. 16.

EXHIBITED: *4th Annual Exhibition, Society of American Artists*, March–April 1881, no. 52; *Twelfth Annual Exhibition of American Artists*, May–September 1918, no. 76; *Homer, Ryder, Eakins*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, May 1930, no. 66; *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., April 8–May 12, 1961, no. 16; *Art in the United States, Part II: 19th and Early 20th Century*, The Brearley School, New York, January 27–March 13, 1964, no. 3; *Collector's Choice*, Katonah Gallery, Katonah, New York, March 30–April 26, 1969, no. 39; *European and American Art from Princeton Alumni Collectors*, The Art Museum, Princeton University, Princeton, New Jersey, May 7–June 11, 1972, no. 39.

NOTES

1. Henry Eckford, "A Modern Colorist," *Century Magazine*, June 1890, p. 257.
2. Ida Ely Rubin, *The Lovers' Boat*, notes in the possession of Alastair Bradley Martin, New York.
3. Lloyd Goodrich, *Albert Ryder*, New York, 1959, p. 18.

The Story of the Cross

A traditional religious theme is the subject of this painting by Albert Ryder, as well as of another work he began about the same time, several years before 1890.¹ It is interesting to compare the Guennol painting with *The Way of the Cross*, one of the two other versions (in the Addison Gallery of American Art, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts). The composition of the figures is the same, but in the Andover picture the woman does not hold a child, the gesturing man is a youth rather than a bearded elder, and in place of the quite lifelike



The Story of the Cross

crucifix there is a kind of wayside shrine: a niche atop a post in which the figures of a *Pietà* can be discerned.

In the present version the simple theme of a wayside preacher is made more complex by the addition of the child, and by the age of the man, for we cannot help but see these figures in a biblical context, as participants in a Flight into Egypt. Thus, the image becomes one of the Madonna and Child, and of the mother confronting the future fate of her Son on the Cross. The motif of the foreshadowing of the sacrificial death at the time of birth is well known in traditional Christian art, although it is impossible to say whether Ryder was aware of any specific early examples. Certainly his own interpretation of the idea—if it was a conscious idea for him—is entirely original.

A drawing in the Art Museum at Princeton University corresponds quite closely to this scene.² Barbara T. Ross notes that this preparatory drawing was made after the painting, for a print that probably was never realized. Although little is known of Ryder's working methods, his various statements about spontaneity and immediacy, together with his self-acknowledged penchant for working over a single canvas, suggest that his first studies of a pictorial idea would have been done directly on canvas.

THE STORY OF THE CROSS

Oil on canvas, mounted on panel (transfer done in 1966), 14x11 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches

EX COLL.: Helen Ladd Corbett, Portland, Oregon, by 1907 (from the artist); Colonel and Mrs. C.E.S. Wood, Portland, Oregon; purchased by the Maynard Walker Gallery, New York, 1957.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Henry Eckford (pseudonym for Charles de Kay), "A Modern Colorist," *Century Magazine*, June 1890, p. 258 (description); Frederic Fairchild Sherman, *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, New York, 1920, pp. 50, 68, no. 17; Frederic Newlin Price, *Ryder*, New York, 1932, pl. 172; Allen Weller, "An Unpublished Letter by Albert P. Ryder," *Art in America*, 27, 2, April 1939, p. 102; Lloyd Goodrich, *Albert Ryder*, New York, 1959, pp. 115, 121, pl. 58; *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1961, no. 49.

EXHIBITED: *Loan Exhibition of Paintings*, Portland Art Association, Oregon, Summer 1909, no. 62; *First Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists*, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, November 1926–January 1927, no. 158; *Albert P. Ryder Centenary Exhibition*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, October–November 1947, no. 43; *Collectors' Finds*, Maynard Walker Gallery, New York, March 1955, no. 9; *American Painting, 1865–1905*, Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, January 1961, Winnipeg Art Gallery, February 1961, no. 55; *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., April 8–May 12, 1961, no. 49; *A Choice of Americans*, Florence Lewison Gallery, New York, January 1962, no. 9; *Four Centuries of American Masterpieces—An Exhibition Arranged by the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture*, World's Fair, New York, 1964–65, no. 24.

NOTES

1. Lloyd Goodrich, *Albert Ryder*, New York, 1959, p. 115.

2. Barbara T. Ross, *American Drawings in the Art Museum, Princeton, New Jersey* 1976, ill. no. 118.

The Lorelei

Although Albert Pinkham Ryder wrote to his good friend and fellow artist J. Alden Weir in 1896, "I have finished . . . Lorelei," he continued to work on the picture until his death in 1917.¹ This kind of obsessive reworking was quite a common practice with Ryder. Unfortunately he often painted over still-wet surface or used incompatible mediums, with the result that tensions between the various paint layers have in many of his works caused deterioration of the paint surface.

The theme of steep, black cliffs looming against a moonlit, cloud-filled sky and plunging into water is Ryder's romantic interpretation of a poetic idea, the fatal attraction of the Lorelei, the mythical maidens of the Rhine, who, like the Sirens of Greek legend, lured men to death with their beautiful song. Though the Siren is small in relation to the rest of the scene, the placement of this figure was of intense concern to Ryder, and he changed it several times.²

Ryder's mature work is characterized by an interest in themes drawn from literature, mythology, and the Bible, and the kinds of subjects he chose indicate that, far from being the isolated artist of popular legend, he was in fact working within the international tradition of Late Romanticism. This tradition gave rise to many movements, one of which came to be called Symbolism. It is in the context of this subjective, often idiosyncratic and highly literary movement that Ryder can best be understood. Shakespearean tragedy, the *Nibelungenlied*, and King Cophetua and the Beggar Maid were subjects that Ryder had in common with his contemporaries in Europe.

The Lorelei legend is perfectly characteristic of this tradition. As a good Romantic subject, its roots are deep in the ancient Germanic past of the Rhineland: Heinrich Heine, the great German Romantic poet, wrote a well-known poem on the theme of the lovely nymph whose singing lured the boatmen to their death. In addition to the historical fascination with the figure of the Siren, her depiction as the *femme fatale* who destroys men by means of her beauty is one of the central images of Symbolist art.

THE LORELEI

Oil on canvas, mounted on solid support
(transfer done in 1966), 22½x19¼ inches

EX COLL.: Colonel C.E.S. Wood, Portland, Oregon; Mrs. Katherine Field Caldwell (stepdaughter of Colonel Wood), Berkeley, California, until 1957; purchased by the Maynard Walker Gallery, New York, 1957.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Frederic Fairchild Sherman, *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, New York, 1920, pp. 45, 74, no. 147; Frederic Newlin Price, *Ryder*, New York, 1932, pl. 87;



The Lorelei

Lloyd Goodrich, *Albert Ryder*, New York, 1959, pp. 31, 116, pl. 76; William Homer, "Ryder in Washington," *The Burlington Magazine*, civ, June 1961, pp. 280–83, ill. no. 109; *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1961, p. 13, no. 57.

EXHIBITED: *First Exhibition of Selected Paintings by American Artists*, California Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, November 1926–January 1927, no. 160; *Albert P. Ryder Centenary Exhibition*, Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, October–November 1947, no. 19; *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., April 8–May 12, 1961, no. 57; *Art in Westchester from Private Collections*, The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, New York, September 28–November 2, 1969, no. 33; *American Imagination and Symbolist Painting*, Grey Art Gallery and Study Center, New York University, New York, October–December 1979, Spencer Museum of Art, University of Kansas, Lawrence, January–March 1980, no. 52.

NOTES

1. Lloyd Goodrich, *Albert Ryder*, New York, 1959, p. 116.
2. *Albert Pinkham Ryder*, Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 1961, p. 13.

*Folk Paintings from Mexico
and the United States*

N. F. KARLINS

Folk Paintings from Mexico and the United States

Folk art is an international phenomenon. It embraces the works of both amateur and professional naïve artists. Unlike academic art, folk art or naïve art is far more idiosyncratic and does not derive from self-consciously related styles and artistic theories. Folk art is usually associated with agrarian, nonindustrialized societies—or segments of such societies physically and/or socially isolated from the cultural mainstream. This isolation allows a closely knit group to develop shared traditions, including artistic ones. At times, even heavily industrialized nations nurture pockets of traditional folk culture—for example, the Appalachian communities in the United States.

It may help to recognize “naïve” art as a subdivision to folk, or non-academic, art. Naïve art has an especially intense emotional impact and a free approach to formal problems and is not usually produced by a member of a particular ethnic subgroup. Many works of twentieth-century folk art are powerful and quirky, and fall into this category. These folk artists may be aware of academic art and simply fail to comprehend it, or they may creatively misinterpret theories and techniques. Folk artists produce art on their own terms, simultaneously outside traditional peasant culture and more advanced society. Motifs derived from peasant and sophisticated influences may appear in folk works, yet each piece of folk art, like all art, responds to the circumstances of time and place surrounding its creation.

At first folk art may confuse those accustomed to academic art, since it presents few familiar stylistic or technical guideposts. Untrained by the usual academic standards, true folk artists struggle to evolve techniques that, for them, are effective visually and emotionally. The straightforward, unpretentious attempts at creation by the nonacademically trained artist often result in what may at first be considered a technically crude product. The best folk art compensates for this seeming deficiency by the sheer imagination of its personal style and the power of its aesthetic statement.

In this country and elsewhere, an ethnographic interest in folk art was replaced by a concern with aesthetic values only from the early twentieth century onward. Collectors and practitioners of modern art were among the first to recognize the aesthetic merits of folk art with its parallel deēemphasis on technique and its search for intense, basic emotions.

Happily the Guennol Collection embraces academic and folk art, and includes excellent examples of folk work from nineteenth-century Mexico and twentieth-century America.

Jaguar

Folk painting in nineteenth-century Mexico has been called more interesting than Mexican academic painting of the same period.¹ Surely one of the most fascinating examples of Mexican folk art is the *tigre*, or jaguar, in the Guennol Collection, a likeness of an animal common to Mexico in both fact and myth.

The painting epitomizes the grace and power of a jaguar. The beast coils its body sensually to allow its bulk to expand across—and dominate—the entire picture plane. The pensive, staring face is sensitively balanced by the swaying body. The alternation of lighter and darker tonalities and the repetition of the large, spotted pattern on his coat are effective, eye-catching elements that make us perceive the

Jaguar



huge animal as a whole. The painting is remarkable for its direct appeal to our emotions and its highly decorative quality. Even the landscape does not detract from the impact of the beast but is unified by this unknown artist's subtle use of color to offset the curvilinear rhythms of the composition.

As with many folk works, nothing is known either of the artist responsible for the jaguar or of the circumstances surrounding its creation.

JAGUAR

Height, 24½ inches; width, 33 inches

Mexico, 19th or early 20th century

EX COLL.: Roberto Montenegro, Mexico City.

BIBLIOGRAPHY: Justino Fernandez, *El arte del siglo XIX en México*, Mexico City, 1967, p. 188.

NOTE

1. Justino Fernandez, *El arte del siglo XIX en México*, Mexico City, 1967, p. 188.

Six La Mona Paintings

The six *La Mona* paintings in the Guennol Collection may be products of either the nineteenth or the early twentieth century. This series of six oils on canvas is related to the traditional *Muras de Pulquerias*. Agave—a species of Mexican plant—is the basis for *pulque*, a fermented drink sipped at drinking and gaming establishments called *pulquerias*. While exterior and interior murals are more likely to be seen in the disappearing Mexican institutions, the *La Mona* paintings are their recent easel-sized equivalents.

This series presents the activities in the pulqueria of *la mona* (“the female monkey”). Different social vices are illustrated, with monkeys taking the parts of human actors. Simple rhymed verses, replete with Mexican slang, appear at the bottom of each canvas as a comment on the action depicted.

A verse on one painting showing the pulqueria, *La Mona*, and a cock fight encourages the viewer to place a bet. As in all the *La Mona*



*One of six
La Mona Paintings*

paintings, profile or full-face poses are common, for these are easier for the folk artist with little or no formal training to execute. There are few hints of three-dimensional realism, but a great interest in symmetry, flat pattern, and design combine to create amusing and affecting works.

SIX LA MONA PAINTINGS

Height, each, about 30 inches; width, each, about 40 inches

Mexico, late 19th or early 20th century



La Mona Paintings







La Mona Painting

The Worker Bee

by Justin McCarthy

Naïve artists, such as Justin McCarthy, are a different breed from American folk artists as a whole. They may or may not be part of a folk subculture, but they are definitely psychologically estranged from whatever is their cultural environment. This estrangement increases the emotional impact of their art. The psychological and emotional displacement of naïve artists has been noted in the past, and the term “eccentric” has often been applied to them.¹ McCarthy’s intense line, nonnaturalistic color and exaggerated drawing are more characteristic of German Expressionism than of most eighteenth- and nineteenth-century

American folk art, which is composed of broad areas of flat color and flat, bold patterns and designs.

Justin McCarthy (May 13, 1891–July 14, 1977)² was one of the most talented and exciting of these naïves to have emerged in the twentieth century in the United States.³ He was born in Weatherly, Pennsylvania, a small town, but he was hardly brought up in an atmosphere of physical or cultural isolation. His father, John L. McCarthy, had come from Wales to Pennsylvania with his parents, while his mother, Floretta Mussleman, was the daughter of a respected Weatherly family. John McCarthy became a printer and eventually the editor of the *Hazelton* (Pennsylvania) *Sentinel*. He ran the successful Congressional campaign of John Leisenring of Luzerne County, Pennsylvania, and served as Leisenring's private secretary in Washington. Speculating heavily in stocks, he later became the richest man in Weatherly. By 1905 he was established as a gentleman farmer and had begun building a home with six rooms and four baths, purportedly designed by Stanford White, at one of his many farms.⁴ The attic was a theater where he helped to stage plays with family and friends. He was also an amateur artist who painted murals for his sons' bedroom and produced oils, sketches, and small wood carvings.

Justin himself remembered making two summer trips to Florida, where his family rented an estate and where he saw J. Pierpont Morgan's yacht anchored nearby. He also had memories of living in Washington in the 1890s, then in Hazelton, and later in Weatherly with his mother's family while the McCarthy home was being built. Justin's father sent him to the Kutztown Normal School and to Hazelton High School; later, he attended Philadelphia's Central High School and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Unfortunately, Justin's father favored his younger son, John, Jr., who was considered to be lively and endearing, while Justin appeared clumsy and shy and not as aggressive as his father would have liked. Justin's mother protected him from his father's occasional temper outbursts; he would remain extremely close to his mother until her death in 1940.

When John, Jr., died suddenly in 1907, the McCarthys rented their farms and heartsick John, Sr., took the family to Europe. Justin was ignored during this stay abroad and frequently found himself without money, friends, or direction. He spent his days in Paris at the Louvre and later maintained that the only reason he went there was because it was cheap.

Although museums and galleries at first may have served only as a refuge for Justin, their treasures nevertheless deeply impressed him and undoubtedly sharpened his appreciation for art—already fostered by his father's interest. Almost seventy years later, Justin could still remember seeing canvases by Rubens, Rembrandt, Gainsborough, and Turner on his trip.

In 1908, Justin was confronted with his father's death and the ruin of the family finances. The elder McCarthy's death (probably a suicide) was a great blow, and Justin would never speak of it directly. Mother

and son lived in Philadelphia, spending summers in Weatherly, where she taught school and tried to promote the town as a summer resort in order to rent rooms to boarders. In 1911 Justin entered law school; he passed his exams the first year, but the next year he failed them. While studying independently with a lawyer who was a friend of the family, Justin suffered a nervous breakdown.

From the summer of 1915 to July 1920, McCarthy was at the Rittersville (Pennsylvania) State Homeopathic Hospital for the Insane. Justin was cognizant of going there and later said he had forgotten who he was.⁵ From this period onward he produced a steady flow of artistic works. Perhaps he felt that, although he had failed to assume his father's role as lawyer and provider, he could compensate, at least partially, by pursuing his father's interest in art. Most of McCarthy's early works were seen only by his mother, but still his painting persisted. Many of these early efforts are no more than doodles, carelessly colored newspaper photographs, or weak attempts at copying coloring books. Yet these humble beginnings became the basis for McCarthy's adept draftsmanship, which can be seen in the uncolored body of *The Worker Bee*.

During the 1920s and 1930s, McCarthy and his mother lived at the decaying family mansion, while he tended their fruit trees and garden with the help of local teenagers. He peddled fruit and vegetables door to door in one of a series of dilapidated automobiles that he loved. McCarthy was well known and liked by the townspeople, although they rarely appreciated his art. He played pool, avidly followed all sports contests in the area, and even managed a local baseball team.

After his mother's death in 1940, McCarthy continued to live in the family home most of the year, peddling vegetables locally and occasionally taking to the road to sell. In the mid-1940s he began selling liniment as well. In the 1940s, he tried a series of other jobs in Pennsylvania, working briefly at the Lawrence Warehouse near Bethlehem, at the Penn Dixie Cement Company near Nazareth (toting bags of cement), and at the Just Born Candy Company (as a chocolate mixer). For several years during World War II he was employed at the Lehigh Plant of Bethlehem Steel as a machinist's helper, and took courses at the Quinn School while rooming in Bethlehem. He completed his first oil, *The Bethlehem Steel Plant*, during this period.

McCarthy continued to produce drawings in a bewildering array of media, constantly exploring new techniques and unorthodox combinations of materials. So strong was his urge to paint that having little money and even less moral support did not deter him. He was equally vehement in the writings that he produced from at least the mid-1920s, ordering the government to give jobs to veterans, get rid of the Communists, and so on. Each is signed "Justin McCarthy," as if his signature alone were enough to accomplish any task. Perhaps this was an indication of the power that he felt his father had had in the past.

McCarthy worked at the Allentown State Memorial Hospital several years after the war and continued to live in the old mansion, gradually shutting off rooms and filling others with paintings. In summers



The Worker Bee

he exhibited his works at outdoor art fairs in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, and gave one-man shows in Weatherly's Tweedle and Urania parks, usually selling few, if any, paintings.

McCarthy's first recognition as an artist did not come until 1960—at least forty years after he began working—when Dorothy Strauser, an artist herself, saw his work in an outdoor art fair in Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. She and her husband, Sterling, also a painter, immediately understood the importance of McCarthy's art, began buying his works and encouraged others to do so. They became friendly with him and, with the help of his friends from Weatherly and nearby communities, supported him in the pursuit of his art and aided him in practical matters.

Many of his major works, including oils and acrylics—as well as drawings—date from the early 1920s. McCarthy won numerous prizes at local art fairs and eventually was included in a traveling show of American naïve painters organized by The Museum of Modern Art, and in exhibitions at the Museum of American Folk Art, in New York.

His works are included in the Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Collection in Williamsburg, Virginia, in The Brooklyn Museum, in the National Collection of American Art, Washington, D.C., and in Weatherly homes, as well as in the Guennol Collection.

Unlike many naïve artists, who use the same materials and similar themes over and over, often obsessively, McCarthy painted practically every type of subject and tried many media. He loved nature and produced hundreds of paintings and drawings of animals, flowers, and insects, such as *The Worker Bee*. His work also included religious subjects (he was known to sketch while attending church services), landscapes, seascapes, and portraits. He especially liked making paintings of sports (which he played and followed); the Ice Capades (which he saw when it appeared in a nearby town); movie stars and glamour girls (who fascinated him because of his own shyness); and plants, such as those that he tended most of his life. The source of *The Worker Bee*, like all of McCarthy's work, is problematic, for he was as willing to sketch ideas from life as to "copy" from newspapers, magazines, posters, and programs, and even from his television screen.

In *The Worker Bee*, exaggerated perspectives combine to create an unusual interpretation of a relatively humble insect. Even more intriguing is the arbitrary use of broad washes of watercolor in the background to contrast with the figure of the bee itself. It is drawn with pen and black ink, but one wing is executed in blue. The background is as lush as the drawing is austere; and the sharp contrast between black and white is set off by the intensity of the green, orange, red, and pinkish red backdrop. McCarthy signed the drawing in pencil, perhaps sometime after the date of its actual execution.

More monstrous than terrifying, *The Worker Bee* is an example of McCarthy's uncanny draftsmanship. Overlapping planes are suggested, then disappear. The effect is to leave the viewer with a more intense, heightened awareness of the main object. In the background, the freely worked watercolor washes are not only surprising in their arbitrary color scheme but also in the way that they are manipulated to enhance the figure of the bee. They also function as compositional devices, drawing attention to the figure, and are essential to McCarthy's rather daringly asymmetrical composition—as is each tiny segment of the work. Even McCarthy's label for the drawing—as well as his name—are inextricably linked to the whole. When he was already in his eighties, McCarthy would take a marvelous finished work that he had not seen for some time, approach it with weakened eyes and a large brush, and scrawl his name in a most unexpected place. The compositional balance was frequently transformed but rarely, if ever, violated.

This drawing is difficult to date, like all undated McCarthy works. While many more of his drawings are undated than dated, dated ones have survived from each decade, beginning with the 1920s on up to the 1970s. In examining several hundred McCarthy drawings, one is struck by the fact that he could employ several different styles simultaneously over long expanses of time. The only way to account for undated works

is by examination of the media that McCarthy used, the subject matter, and the drawing style. We know, for example, that a friend presented him with phosphorescent poster paints in the early 1970s with which he made a series of literally and figuratively brilliant drawings. A few scenes of the Southwest can safely be called late works, since McCarthy visited Arizona or New Mexico in the winter, from 1974 until his death in Tucson in 1977. And the relative looseness of the drawing reflects his weakening eyesight as he reached his seventies.

Although the Guennol Collection includes many other drawings and oils by McCarthy, *The Worker Bee* is perhaps most representative of the artist's work; it contains a type of subject matter that appears regularly throughout his oeuvre. Although it does not seem to relate to a specific event in the artist's life, the drawing's style suggests a work of the late 1920s or 1930s.

THE WORKER BEE
by Justin McCarthy

Signed: JusMcCarthy

Pen and ink, graphite, and watercolor

Height, 8⁷/₈ inches; length, 11⁵/₈ inches

Weatherly, Pennsylvania, about 1928

EX COLL.: Mr. and Mrs. Sterling Strauser, Pennsylvania.

NOTES

1. Nancy Karlins, "More Than Just Folks: Contemporary American Naïve Artists," *Village Voice* (New York), August 22, 1977, pp. 67–68.

2. McCarthy's birthdate is usually given as 1892, because his Pennsylvania driver's license carried that date, but 1891 is entered as his date of birth on his University of Pennsylvania Law School registration form. Either could be correct.

3. The pioneering work in this area is *20th Century American Folk Art and Artists*, by Herbert W. Hemphill, Jr., and Julia Weissmann, New York, 1974, p. 168.

4. Much of the data on the McCarthy family was given to me in personal conversations with the residents of Weatherly, Pennsylvania. I wish to thank them for their generosity and kindness, especially Mary Brown Thompson and Jack Koehler. A description of the McCarthy mansion appeared in the *Hazleton Standard-Speaker* in 1905.

5. Those dates are contained in a statement signed by McCarthy in his scrapbook (collection of the author).

List of Dealers

To publish this catalogue without acknowledging those who supplied us with our works of art would be to ignore a very important aspect of collecting. Except for the precarious and romantic possibility of recovering art treasures through excavations, and the uncertain resources of the auction room, it is difficult to imagine how collectors could operate but for art dealers. Yet the role of the dealers is not usually appreciated.

Their service to the collector is much the same as that of the honey guide to the honey badger, a relationship of mutual advantage. Frequently they are responsible for the discovery and preservation of the art of earlier ages. Sometimes, far in advance of the market, they risk their capital and reputation against the whim of the moment and the taste of the collector. Many of them in the past have determined the character of important collections.

Our experiences with art dealers have been for the most part pleasant, frequently instructive, and occasionally amusing. Perhaps this has been because we have refrained from complete dependence on one or two dealers, unlike some earlier collectors. Our theory has been that fine works of art might turn up anywhere, and we have searched for and found them in many parts of the world.

Remembering many agreeable transactions, we are pleased in this publication of the Collection to hail the following sources for objects described in both volumes of *The Guennol Collection*:

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Epilogue

*Let go, let go the anchors;
Now shamed at heart are we
To bring so poor a cargo home
That had for gift the sea!
Let go the great bow-anchor—
Ah, fools we were and blind—
The worst we stored with utter toil,
The best we left behind!*

—Rudyard Kipling

There has been challenge and pleasure in assembling the Collection, which in many ways represents a microcosm of contemporary taste. It is difficult to assess the value of the Guennol Collection because opinions on such things vary. For example, many years ago, Bärchen, an illegitimate offspring of Albert the Bear, Margrave of Brandenburg, learned of a wondrous treasure high in the Transylvanian Alps. Being a devoted collector, he made the long trek through dangerous lands and obtained it, returning months later to his crag castle, skeletonized and wearied by the arduous journey but happy with his purchase: two small boxes, one containing Jacob's dream and the other the shadow of John the Baptist.

A. B. M.

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